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the TRAVELLERS' Digest

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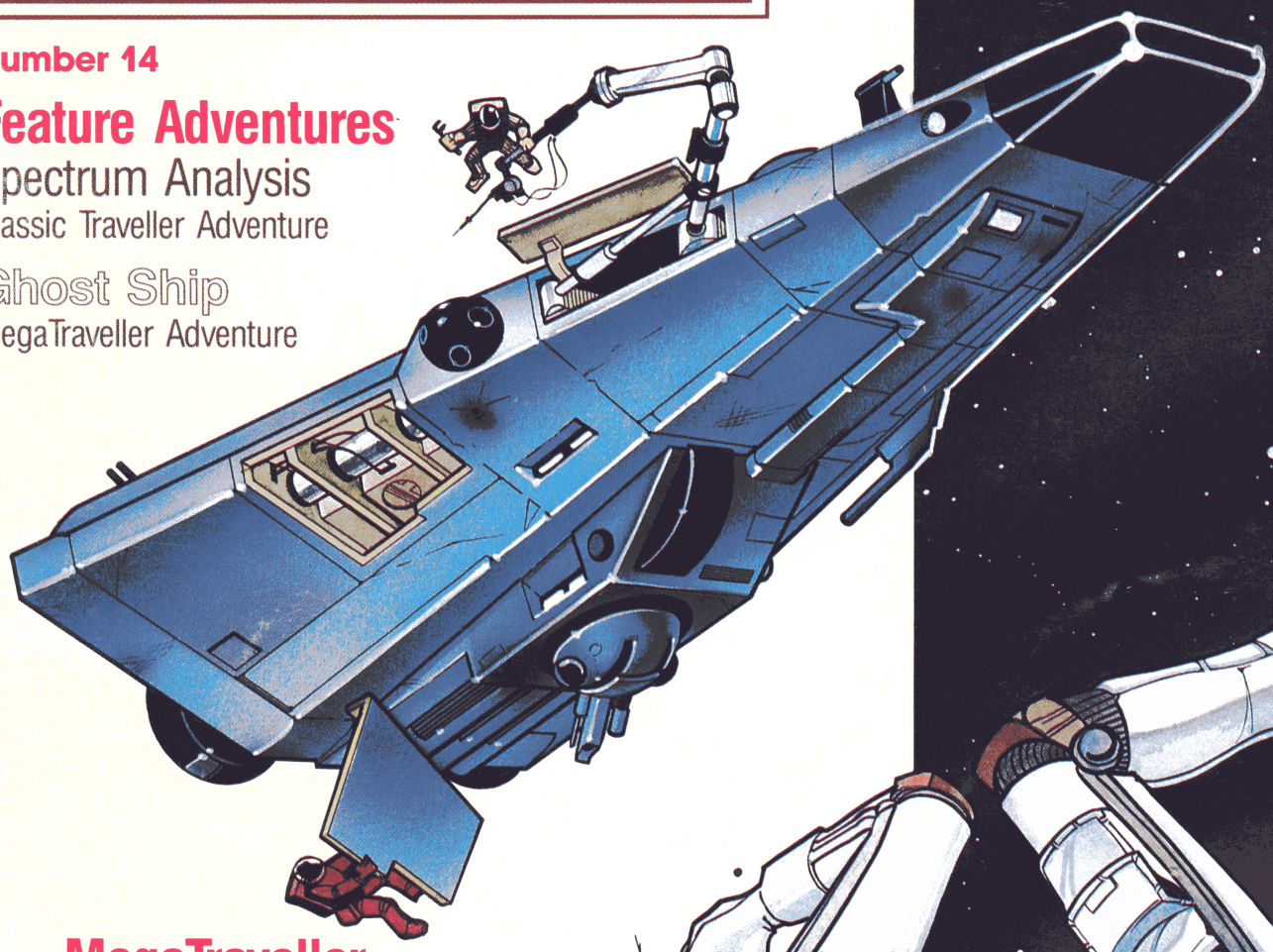
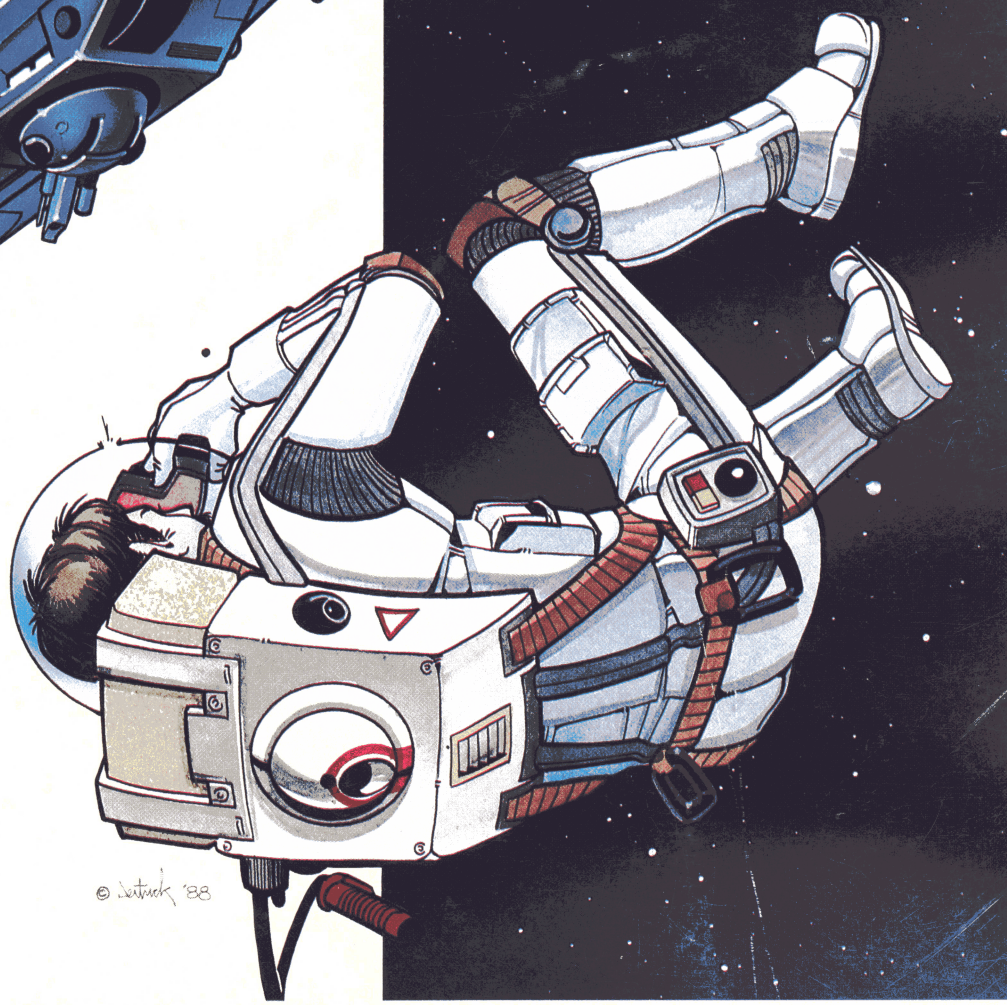
Number 14

Feature Adventures

Spectrum Analysis
Classic Traveller Adventure

Ghost Ship
MegaTraveller Adventure





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Spectrum Analysis
FEATURE ADVENTURE

"Social revolutions are not the work of societies. All too often, the turning points in a world's history are the result of the solitary activities of a single individual."

— Akidda Laagiir, from "An Encounter with an Ambassador" in the *Travellers' Digest*, 1109 .

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Editors' Digest

FROM THE DESKS OF GARY L. THOMAS AND JOE D. FUGATE SR.

Obvious Tidings: This issue of your favorite magazine is a little late. So what's our excuse this time? Go to your favorite game store and look at *Starship Operator's Manual* for the answer. Like it? Good — it took us just a wee bit longer than we expected, and the magazine slipped because of it.

Fortunately, we've made some changes to help us get back on track. If you check our masthead, you'll see that Robert Parker and Nancy Parker have been promoted to associate editors. They'll be in charge of coordinating the schedule and production of the magazine, so you should be seeing it on a more regular basis from now on. (Give 'em a chance to catch up, of course, while doing issue 15 and 16 — but issue 17 *will* be on time, they promise.)

Also new to our masthead (but not to our pages) is William W. Connors, our latest contributing editor. Congrats, Bill!

One other change you may notice is that Joe Fugate is now full-fledged editor along with Gary Thomas. (This "change" is really just recognition that Joe has been doing half the editing work for several issues now, so don't expect the magazine to look any different because of it.)

New Products: You didn't really think that we would let our latest baby go by with just a mention, did you? *Starship Operator's Manual* is at your local store at this very moment, and certainly deserves your careful perusal. We think this is our best effort yet — everything you ever wanted to know about starships in **Traveller** under one cover. (Everything? Then why'd you subtitle it *Volume 1*? Ahh, so you noticed. Maybe not *everything*, then.)

Anyway, the book does have deck plans and perspective views of the interior and exterior of a free trader, along with details of ship operations, giving a complete rundown on how things work, both in the "real world" and in terms of the game. Over 20 positions are described in a section on crew duties. Finally, our resident "old timer" brings everything to life by commenting throughout the book on his experiences aboard both Naval and merchant vessels.

Our other new project (slated to hit the stores by the end of January) is our *Referee Screen*. On the pages of this screen are all the tables you need to be able to run a **Mega-Traveller** game efficiently: combat flowcharts and tables, details on interpersonal tasks, and encounters, all at the referee's fingertips. Charts for the players have direct fire difficulty profiles and demolition tables (our characters are *always* blowing stuff up). Interspersed among these goodies are 12 equipment sheets and two four-page folio adventures, taking place in Zarushagar Sector on the border of Dulinor's and Lucan's territories. If you're tired of thumbing through the books in the middle of the action, then the *Referee Screen* is meant for you. (Topped off with beautiful artwork by David Deitrick, and Tom Peters — not only a useful product but an attractive one.)

Did You Move? Many readers are confused by the services that the friendly and efficient U.S. Postal Service provides. If you move and file a change-of-address notice, the post office will *not* automatically forward your latest issue to you. Instead, they will send the magazine *back* to us, often with no word of your new address. We then have to sit on it, waiting for you to write and chew us out for not sending you the issue — sometimes months later.

Fortunately, the post office does have change-of-address postcards, which you can fill out and send directly to us. That way, you won't miss any of the ongoing excitement, and you'll save us time and money because we'll have to send the issue to you only once.

Also, if your rural route address is being phased out, *you* must write and tell us about it, since the post office will not forward the magazine to you even though the address change was all their idea.

Uh-Oh department: We neglected to give Howard Leidner and Rob Prior credit for their contributions to *Starship Operator's Manual*. They should have been listed under "Additional Design".

Good News/Bad News: The **"Traveller** Arsenal" is fast becoming one of our more popular columns, so we've expanded it to two pages and beefed up the content, so it's more like the equipment sheets in our *Referee Screen*. So where is it, you ask? Well, you see, it's two pages, now, and we didn't quite have the room, so...look for **"Traveller** Arsenal" coming back bigger and better than ever next issue.

Xmas Presents: If you've always wanted to get a copy of GDW's **2300AD** game, now is a good time to indulge yourself. The new boxed sets have a copy of *Kafer Dawn* inside, making this a great bargain.

Reader Feedback: Our first reader survey gave us some food for thought in planning the contents of future issues. Herewith are the results, by title, followed by the number of responses for "Hated It", "Middle", and "Loved It", respectively:

	H	M	L
Adventure: Terra Incognita	0	6	10
System Survey: Terra	0	4	12
Dolphins	1	2	13
Adventure: The Trouble w/ Kids	2	11	3
Rebel Reporter	2	6	8
Gaming Digest	0	5	11
Medical Digest	0	5	11
Solomani Rim	0	9	7
Traveller Q & A	0	8	8
Terran Occupation Force	0	6	10
2300AD: Pentapod Starships	4	7	5

Adventure: Played as written (13%), used in some fashion (31%), only read it (56%).

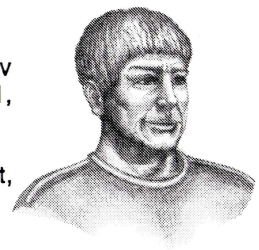
2300AD coverage: Expand (31%), leave the same (44%), reduce (25%).

So there you have it. One salient feature of the survey that you may have noticed is that only 16 people responded. What this means is that you passed up a 3 in 16 chance for a prize if you didn't send your survey in. Don't let that happen again! Fill out the survey in this issue and send it in! Hop to it! Right now! Well, OK, if you insist on reading the articles first, you *could* do it a little later...but don't forget! (Incidentally, autographed copies of *101 Vehicles* went out to Randy Windle, Michael G. Brill, and James Elliott. Congrats, guys!)•

THE CHARACTERS

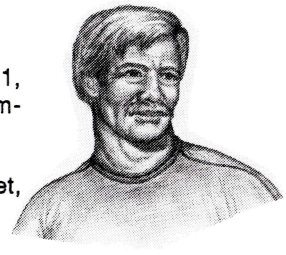
This adventure is intended for the characters listed below. Even though the characters listed are all male, feel free to change any or all of the genders as desired. The character data are listed using the **MegaTraveller** format.

Akidda Laagiir, Journalist



858AAB age 46 6 terms Cr 21,000
Interview-5, Streetwise-3, Grav Vehicle-1, Wheeled Vehicle-1, Admin–1, Brawling-1, Computer-0
Holocrystal Recorder
Starport A, Large, Dense Atm, Wet, High Pop, Mod Law, High Stellar
Born: 319-1059

Dur Telemon, Ex-Scout

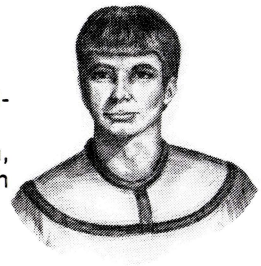


A7A85B age 39 3 terms Cr10,000
Auto Pistol-3, Survival-2, Pilot-1, Grav Vehicle-1, Engineer-1, Gambling-1, Brawling-1, Computer-1
Auto Pistol
Starport A, Large, Dense Atm, Wet, High Pop, Mod Law, High Stellar
Born: 038-1068

Dr. Theodor Krenstein, Scientist

485FCB age 64 10 terms Cr 300,000
Robotics-5, Leader-3, Electronics-2, JOT-2, Laser Rifle-1, Grav Vehicle-1, Medical-1, Mechanical-1
Hand Computer (TL15), Electronic Tool Kit, Robot AB-101
Starport A, Small, Vacuum Atm, Wet, High Pop, Mod Law, High Stellar
Born: 173-1043

Aybee Wan Owen, Valet



Apparent Stats:
8D9C7B age 19 0 terms Cr 0
Medical-1, Linguistics-1, Grav Vehicle-1, Laser Welder-1
Starport A, Small, Vacuum Atm, Wet, High Pop, Mod Law, High Stellar
Born: 049-1081
Actual Robot Profile:
AB-101, Pseudobiological Robot
Constructed in 1091 by Dr. Theodor Krenstein
561x2-A2-PM327-FDC7(J) Cr11,970,600 319kg
Fuel=78.1 Duration=21.7 TL=15
7/17 (Jack)
Head (10%), 2 Lt arms
2 Eyes (+1 light intens), 2 ears, voder, touch sensors
Pwr int, brain int, TL 15 holo recorder, Lt laser welder
Medical-1, Linguistics-1, Grav Vehicle-1, Valet-1, Laser Welder-1, Rescue-1, Emotion Simulation

PLAYING THE CHARACTERS

Some of an adventure's most memorable moments are those that occur as the players play out their characters' roles in a believable manner. To aid in this, we provide the following background details and roleplaying pointers for the player characters.

AKIDDA LAAGIIR

Position: Current recipient of the *Travellers' Digest* Touring Award.

Akidda Laagiir started at age 18 as a copy boy with the *Mora World Review*; his friendly face and ability to gain the trust of others contributed to his steady career progress.

Living on Mora, with its charismatic dictator, the Duchess Delphine the Matriarch, is sometimes a trying experience for any journalist, which may explain his occasionally iconoclastic actions. He is slightly prejudiced against "the system", preferring fresh ideas and fresh ways of doing things. This boldness (especially in interview situations) has also contributed favorably to his career.

His admin skill was learned while moving up the ranks, but it is a skill that he would just as soon not need: he much prefers cutting through to the heart of a situation. While he is sensitive to the needs of others, he has a well developed self-preservation instinct that allows him to quickly adapt to a strange locale or culture — a skill that has saved his neck on more than one occasion.

Like most writers, he is consumed with curiosity, and when the *Travellers' Digest* journalism contest was held again in 1098, he was among the first to apply. His piece was entitled "The Imperial Frontier: The Next Millenium". In it, he discussed the spinward frontier sectors of Deneb, Spinward Marches, Trojan Reach, and Reft as well as their role in shaping the growth of the Imperium in the next 1,000 years. On 258-1099, he received the announcement that he had won the coveted *Travellers' Digest* Touring Award.

Akidda has been travelling and submitting articles of his travels for over five years.

Roleplaying Notes: Akidda's strong interview skill indicates he has a real nose for a good story: to play him otherwise would be untrue to his character. His natural curiosity makes him likely to pursue "trouble" rather than run from it.

The counterbalance to Akidda's tendency to seek out such trouble is his streetwise skill, which enables him to lessen the harmful results of an otherwise awkward situation. His streetwise skill may enable him to "stumble" onto a valuable source of information the others would overlook.

Keeping this in mind, the referee should use the NPCs encountered by Akidda as those with the most valuable information to the group, as a result of Akidda's abilities. Akidda's phenomenal interview-5 skill gives him tremendous insight when dealing with people.

DUR TELEMON

Position: Ex-Scout (on reserve status).

Dur Telemon was *born* into the Scout Service. His father was in the Scout Service while Dur was growing up, and both of his grandfathers had served in the Scouts in their younger days. Dur enjoyed nothing more as a boy than to sit and listen to their tales of adventure.

The Fourth Frontier War broke out when Dur was a teenager — his father's service in the war was a source of pride for the entire family and deepened Dur's love for the Scouts.

Dur's individualistic nature meshed well with his duties in the Exploration Office of the Scout Service. In his first term, a "routine" mapping expedition on Pannet/Rhylanor suddenly turned into a hostage rescue operation, and it was then that Dur happened to save Dr. Krenstein's life. Neither of them is overly emotional about it, but it was that initial chance encounter that grew into a respect and friendship between the two men over the years.

Dur's second and third terms were spent in District 268 and Five Sisters Subsectors doing various planetary surface and orbital surveys. During these surveys, Dur learned much about staying alive and living off the land in unusual environments. Halfway through his fourth term, he was transferred from his field post in the Exploration Branch to a bureaucratic position in Fleet Support.

Dur has resigned from the Scouts and has been travelling with his uncle, Akidda Laagiir.

Roleplaying Notes: Dur is the brash adventurer of the group and as such he is the least likely to fear physical confrontations or physical discomfort. He is also the most likely of the group to act without giving due consideration to the consequences. He has genuine concern for others and is the most likely to risk his life to save someone.

DR. THEODOR KRENSTEIN

Position: Graz Redniz Chair of Computational Robotics at Rhylanor Institute of Technology — on sabbatical leave.

Dr. Theodor Krenstein is a gifted, multi-talented scientist, with interests from anthropology and archaeology to xenology and zoology, including most of the "ologies" in between.

Born on the planet Rhylanor, he entered the Rhylanor Institute of Technology at the age of eighteen, eventually receiving advanced degrees in computer science and robotics. He went on to serve three terms as Dean of the School of Robotic Science at RIT, after which he was appointed to the Graz Redniz Chair of Computational Robotics, a prestigious and coveted position. He is the author of 12 holocrystal publications and over 100 articles in technical and scientific journals, in addition to holding more than 250 Imperial military patents for his inventions and robotics work. Despite his academic success, he has become bored with what he has been doing, and realizing his age, took an extended sabbatical from teaching in order to make forays through Deneb Sector.

Among his many pursuits, Dr. Krenstein has aided the Scouts in developing robots for planetary surface surveys. During a test in 1090 on Pannet/Rhylanor, members of a disgruntled anti-technist group kidnaped Dr. Krenstein and threatened to kill him if the Scout Service didn't meet their demands. A young Scout named Dur Telemon was part of the all-volunteer raiding team that finally freed Dr. Krenstein; in fact, Dur was the first to reach the doctor.

After this incident, the doctor constructed his servant, bodyguard, and experiment in synaptic learning, "Aybee".

Dr. Krenstein has been travelling with Dur Telemon and Akidda Laagiir since their chance meeting seven years ago.

Roleplaying Notes: Dr. Krenstein, the "Mr. Fix-it" of the group, contributes valuable analytical skills. Together with Aybee, the doctor may contribute unusual insights Dur or even Akidda might otherwise overlook.

The doctor is slightly mischievous in the manner in which he conceals Aybee's true robotic nature — a source of much fun if roleplayed completely. The doctor seeks new experiences and knowledge for both his robot and himself, so he will pursue adventure suggestions readily.

Keep the doctor's age in mind — he is the least able of the group physically, although Aybee helps to make up for this.

AYBEE WAN OWEN

Position: Personal servant and protégé of Dr. Krenstein.

AB-101, or "Aybee", is a pseudobiological robot designed and constructed by Dr. Krenstein. Aybee's apparent UPP is what Dr. Krenstein wishes Aybee to project to others based upon his programming (he is actually capable of much greater values); his intelligence and education are estimated from his computer hardware and software; and his social class is based upon his position as a knight.

Although Aybee's programming gives him certain basic abilities, he lacks true artificial intelligence and thus can make errors in judgment; in abstract situations, this effectively lowers his true skill level. Aybee's "weapon" is a light laser welder, built into his right arm. Many Imperial worlds specify standards for robot-installed weapons, and Dr. Krenstein has designed Aybee so that his arm (ostensibly used only as a tool) can pass inspection by officials, since laser welders are generally not restricted by local law levels; however, voice override controls allow Dr. Krenstein to use Aybee as a weapon at short range.

Roleplaying Notes: Without a doubt, Aybee is the most unusual of the quartet. He is also the most difficult to roleplay effectively.

Aybee is the most valuable piece of equipment the group has. He can record situations in 3-D holograph form (10 minutes' worth, after which it is relegated to 2-D storage), then play them back for future study at the group's leisure. He will quietly observe a situation and report his findings to the doctor, keeping the doctor's safety as his priority.

Aybee is a good source of logical analysis, although his conclusions are devoid of any creativity or revelations beyond the obvious (although sometimes the obvious can seem like a revelation). Play him as a naïve, knowledge-hungry character. He should make errors in judgment when a situation relies heavily on intuition. He is likely to miss subtle innuendos that humans are so prone to use.

Strangers who find out that Aybee is a robot may react negatively (increase the difficulty of any interpersonal task one level). Most will never suspect from casual observation that Aybee is nothing but a machine.

To determine Aybee is a robot at close (1.5m) range:
Difficult, Robotics, Interview, 2 min

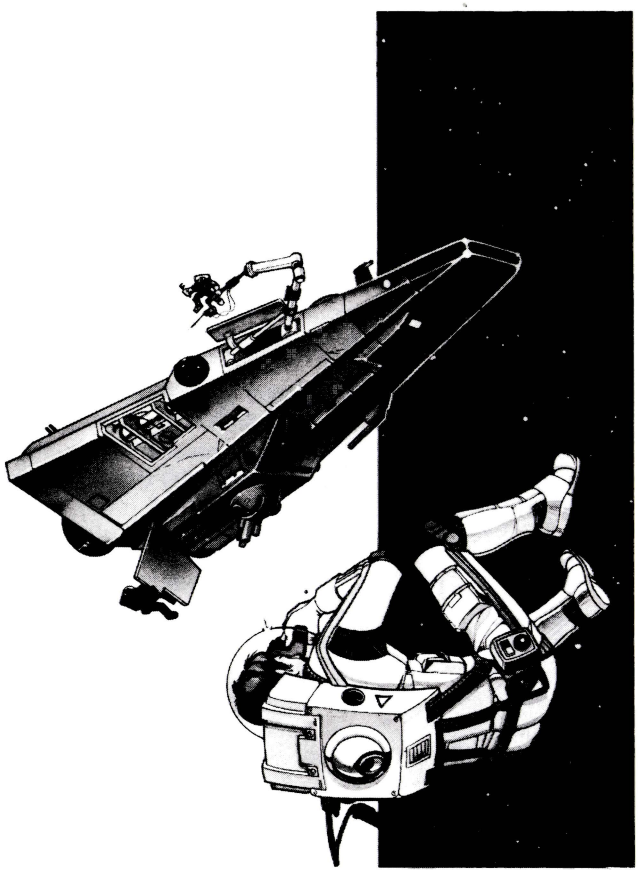
Referee: Roll once during the first encounter. Thereafter roll daily if the character constantly spends extended periods of time near Aybee. Otherwise, ignore this task — there is no chance for detection.

Aybee's power plant is a closed hydrogen/open oxygen fuel cell. Aybee carries his own hydrogen supply, but the hydrogen is oxidized by oxygen from the air. Aybee is thus much like a true human in this respect — if he loses his oxygen supply, his power plant will not function. After an accident at the Shudusham Robotics Conference, Krenstein installed a half-hour supply of oxygen for emergencies. Aybee's fuel cell produces a harmless waste by-product which must be eliminated from time to time: pure water.•

Spectrum Analysis

ADVENTURE NUMBER 14

—by John Theisen and Gary L. Thomas



INTRODUCTION

This adventure deals with a *Travellers' Digest* journalist and his companions in their continuing tour of the Imperium. The group, using a borrowed Scout ship, has experienced equipment difficulties while entering the Spectrum system, and they are now awaiting the arrival of replacement parts.

Chapters: This adventure is in several chapters, most of which are material to be read only by the referee.

The adventure is in "nugget" format, since the situation is apt to be played in a non-linear fashion. More information about nuggets is given below. The chapter "More Than Meets the Eye" introduces the characters and the situation. This section may be used in one of two ways: either read it to the players, or have them each read their characters' parts. The idea in either case is to acquaint them with the characters and their personalities.

The chapter "From Point Alpha to Point Beta" and the *World Builder's Handbook* profiles contain information available to the characters, either through personal experience or as library data.

Dates: All dates herein correspond to the Imperial calendar. The starting date of this adventure is 261-1107.

Place: This adventure starts in the city of New Town on Spectrum/Blackjack in Magyar Sector.

NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

Lars Lonlo, Journalist
62199A age 46 7 terms
Persuasion-3, Gravitics-2, Interview-1, Leader-1, Carousing-1, Bribery-1, Disguise-1, Commo-1, Robot Ops-1, Streetwise-1, History-2, Artisan-1, JOT-1, Jet-propelled Aircraft-1, Grav Vehicle-0, Computer-0, Rifleman-0
Starport E, Small, Thin Atm, Wet, High Pop, High Law, Avg Stellar

Lars is a well-known commentator for one of Spectrum's largest media services. Possessing an acid tongue and a critical mind, he often takes highly controversial positions on popular issues. Lars is unfamiliar with Akidda Laagiir's work, but will have respect and admiration for any recipient of the prestigious Digest Touring Award.

Dr. Brion Steu, Scientist
2669BB age 38 5 terms
Robotics-4, Admin-2, Animal Handling-1, Recon-1, Handgun-1, Computer-2, Small Water Craft-1, Jet-propelled Aircraft-1, Artisan-1, Carousing-1, Leader-1, Grav Vehicle 0
Starport E, Small, thin Atm, Wet, High Pop, High Law, Avg Stellar

An instructor at Spectrum University, Dr. Steu is a skilled technician and programmer specializing in certain aspects of robotic control circuitry. He made a minor presentation at the 1104 Shudusham Robotics Conference, but his report was not well received (in hindsight, he blames this on inadequate research).

Jalir Paninwahl, Student
A8CA62 age 26 2 terms
Robotics-3, Electronics-2, Carousing-1, Brawling-1, Grav Vehicle-0
Starport E, Small, Thin Atm, Wet, High Pop, High Law, Avg Stellar
Jalir is a Spectrum University doctoral student and a devoted protege of Dr. Steu.

Tarkis K'tal, Administrator
1765DB age 42 6 terms
Admin-4, Liaison-3, Interrogation-2, Leader-1, Linguistics-1, Helicopter-1, Wheeled Vehicle-1, Grav Vehicle-0, Computer-0, Rifleman-0
Starport E, Small, Thin Atm, Wet, High Pop, High Law, Avg Stellar

K'tal is an associate regent at Spectrum University, often handling sensitive public relations and VIP escort assignments. What he lacks in genuine intelligence, he makes up for with an almost instinctive sense for negotiation and an innate talent for defusing angry crowds or probing inquiries.

Sendal Warenj, Ambassador
373ACA age 46 7 terms
Liaison-4, Bribery-3, History-3, Computer-2, Legal-2, Grav Vehicle-0, Computer-0
Starport E, Small, Thin Atm, Wet, High Pop, High Law, Avg Stellar

By occupation, Sendal is an ambassador-at-large for the Solomani Party. On his own time, however, he is the "official" spokesman of the Society for the Sovereignty of Man over Machine on Spectrum. He finds absolutely no contradiction between his job and his SSMM membership, as the SSMM's goals and the goals of the Solomani Party are not inherently contradictory.

MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE (Opening Dialogue)

"Dur, you just don't understand what it means to travel on an expense account. If the Scouts are footing the bill, they're footing the bill. It doesn't matter what it comes to, they'll pay it without even looking at it."

"I guess so, Kidd," the Scout answered, "but I still feel bad about it. This will run into millions of credits."

"So what? A million to the Scouts is a drop in the bucket. By the time they get the charges no one will even care." Akidda Laagiir, a journalist, had travelled from the Spinward Marches to Solomani space, and was now stuck on Spectrum while the *Andante Polaris* had its jump drive overhauled. His travelling companions were his nephew, Dur Telemon (an ex-Scout), Dr. Theodor Krenstein, the eminent roboticist from the Rhylanor Institute of Technology, and "Aybee Wan Owen", a pseudobiological robot and Dr. Krenstein's finest research project. On Spectrum, they had docked the Scout vessel at the starport and wandered into New Town. A shopping area had attracted their attention, and they were wandering through it while talking.

Dur shook his head and looked at Krenstein. "Do you see my point, Doc? I still have some kind of debt to the service — if not for them, we wouldn't have the use of the ship in the first place."

Akidda answered before Krenstein had a chance to speak. "That's exactly right, Dur, and we wouldn't have had as our only passenger His Excellency the Royal Pain in the —"

"Akidda," Krenstein said, "as glad as we all are that he disembarked at Ungarn, if not for the ambassador we would be unable to repair the ship at all."

"Right, Krenstein, and he's only charging us triple for the privilege."

Dur shook his head again. "That's what bothers me. We're responsible for the ship, so we have to have it fixed, but it seems we could find a port that could do it at the right price."

"Where, Dur?" Akidda asked. "You yourself said we were lucky to make it to Spectrum. We can get it fixed here, or we can junk it. And the only way to get it fixed here is to have the ambassador arrange to have the parts and technicians sent here and bill the Imperium for the repairs. It's not my fault that the Solomani want to stick the Imperium for a little extra off the top."

"Still," Dur said, "I don't know about this deal. If the ambassador doesn't follow through, we could sit here a long time waiting for equipment that will never arrive."

Aybee by now had had a chance to look around, and seized upon this opportunity to take Dur's mind off his troubles. "Look at those people there, Dur," the robot said. "They seem to be playing some new game."

A large illuminated sign boldly proclaimed "Plasma Platoon", and beneath it two men wearing goggles were seated at a glass-topped table across from each other. On the tabletop, tiny holographic figures could be seen engaged in mortal combat, entrenching their positions, advancing and retreating, and firing plasma guns at their respective opponents. The men at the table were deep in concentration, tapping their orders into the controls as the positions of the soldiers changed at each moment.

Krenstein took in the scene before Dur did. "Ingenious! Want to play me in a game, Dur? If we hurry, we can be next in line."

"Sure, Doc, if you don't mind losing in front of all your friends."

"It won't be quite that simple, Dur," the scientist chuckled. "We could even place a little bet, if you'd like an extra incentive."

Aybee waved his hands at his creator in a gesture of warning. "I don't think this would be wise, Dr. Krenstein."

Dur guffawed. "Aybee sure has confidence in you, Doc. I'll match as much as you're willing to stake."

"That's not what I meant," the robot said. "I'm concerned for the doctor's physical safety, so I'm wondering why the players are wearing goggles."

Krenstein put his hand on Aybee's shoulder. "Not to worry, Aybee. It appears that the goggles are mainly for effect. Those lasers are flashing brightly enough, to be sure, but here where we're standing they're harmless, and over there my eyes would be just as safe with the goggles on. Come on, Dur, we're next."

At that moment, a young man in a blue sweater stepped in the way. "Hold on, please, while I reset this for the next game." Krenstein and Dur backed up as the man opened a panel on the side of the table and fiddled with the controls. "Thanks, folks, that's all it takes," he said as he closed the door and stepped out of the way.

Before the scientist and the Scout could sit down, though, another couple took their places at the game and slipped on the goggles.

"Hey," Aybee said. "That wasn't fair!"

"It's all right," Krenstein conceded. "We'll be next, and we're certainly in no hurry today."

The four travellers watched as the man and woman started to play. The randomizer gave the woman a better initial position, but made up for it by requiring her to defend against the man's troops, which began their advance as soon as he touched the controls. The woman was an able defender, though, and aimed her weaponry at the man's closest group, taking it out with the first shot as the laser lights flashed over the table and the speakers blasted out the roar of the plasma guns.

"Watch it, dear!" the man shouted. "It's not over yet." A squad on his left had advanced during the melee, and was now in position to fire. Lights flashed as the game's laser let

loose its bolt. The woman screamed, and the game table went suddenly dark as her lifeless body slumped across it.

Dur glanced up to see the man in the blue sweater ducking out a side door, and took off after him.

"Aybee!" Krenstein said, "hold that data uncompressed — we'll need every detail later." He was already bent over the woman, examining her wound, while her companion just stared in blank terror from the other side of the table.

Akidda Laagiir put his face near the doctor's ear and whispered. "Seems to me, Krenstein, that if that woman had any manners you'd be sitting where she is right now."

NUGGETS (Referee Instruction)

"Nuggets" are sources of information during the adventure. In "Spectrum Analysis", each section is written so as to be as independent as possible from other sections. Since all of the sections refer to a single adventure, of course, there is a great deal of overlap, but the nuggets are designed so that the adventure is non-linear. In other words, your players don't have to follow a certain path between start and finish. There are many different routes to the conclusion of this adventure.

After the opening dialogue is read to the players and the situation at the store is resolved, two nuggets that should be encountered early on are the media account of the death, with the official SSMM reaction to it, and Dr. Steu's invitation to Krenstein to visit Spectrum University. Most other nuggets can occur in any order, as the players decide what the characters do and come closer to solving the crime.

FROM POINT ALPHA TO POINT BETA (Player Background)

Akidda Laagiir and his party, currently aboard the Scout ship *Andante Polaris*, are en route from Terra in Solomani Rim Sector to Daibei Sector. While continuing their grand tour of the Imperium, an incident occurred at Beta/Magyar (3128): an Imperial marquis, in the midst of interstellar trade negotiations, was forced by circumstances to provide immediate transportation for a visiting Solomani ambassador. Though a ship could be found, no normal ship's complement was available, and protocol required that an Imperial knight be included as diplomatic honor escort. Fortunately, the qualified party of Laagiir, Telemon, Krenstein, and Owen was headed in the right general direction, and an arrangement agreeable to both sides was made. In exchange for their timely assistance in transporting the ambassador from Beta to Ungarn/Magyar (1736), a distance of 20 parsecs, the group would be given free use of the *Andante Polaris* until they reached the IISS base at Nu Polis, Hermes, or Narya, in Daibei Sector.

However, all has not gone well. This particular ship is long overdue for a jump drive plant overhaul, and the last few jumps have been a real challenge to make safely. Besides this danger, the ambassador's company has been unpleasant to say the least: he is prone to impossible demands and expects service that no passenger liner could accommodate.

Even so, the group succeeded in getting the ambassador (whose exact identity they never learned) to Ungarn as agreed. Just before letting the ambassador off, Dur happened to mention the ship's equipment problems. The ambassador, in a surprisingly magnanimous offer, said he would arrange for a *new* jump power plant to be installed, on credit, if the problems were so severe. Of course, the Solomani Confederation would later charge the Imperium triple the going rate for the repairs, but this would not affect the group; it's not their ship, after all!

The group gratefully accepted the offer, and the ambassador was to make arrangements to deliver the necessary components from the Solomani Naval Base on Lazlo's World (Magyar 1134) to Spectrum, the next major stop on the group's route and the ambassador's homeworld. Spectrum was conveniently located, and Dr. Krenstein wanted to visit Spectrum University, an institute whose Academy of Electronics and Robotics is as influential in this sector as the Rhylanor Institute of Technology is in the Spinward Marches.

As the *Andante Polaris* completed its jump and "staggered" into the Spectrum system, Dur realized the ship could not make another jump in its current sorry state. The group is stuck on Spectrum until parts arrive. Fortunately, it should only take about three weeks, *if* the ambassador was able to requisition the necessary parts, *if* the parts were available, *if* the ambassador took action as quickly as he promised, and *if* he even decided to keep his word. As the group evaluated their situation, there was no doubt that it was a long series of doubtful possibilities.

AFTERMATH OF DEATH (First Nugget)

Dur is unable to catch the culprit in the crowds outside the store, no matter how hard he tries. (Fake a few uncertain task rolls.) A few minutes after the group witnesses the shooting in the game store, as described in "More Than Meets the Eye", the local authorities and the media arrive, including crack anchorman Lars Lonlo. The police and the reporter both try to interrogate everyone present, almost (but not quite) getting in each other's way. Of course, Aybee had already taken holographic recordings of the incident, including pictures of the young man running away. Depending on what the characters reveal to the authorities (or whether they stick around at all), the murder may be explained only as an unfortunate accident.

Even if the characters give Aybee's holographic recordings to the police, the official report is that the woman's death was an accident, and the investigation will be closed. Further, if Aybee's true nature is revealed, all four characters are arrested and hauled down to the police station for questioning. Spectrum's law level, after all, is B — as referee, you should make sure that the players are worried and that their characters are given the third degree: bright lights, threats (but no real physical damage), incessant questioning by a team of interrogators, sleep deprivation — the works. (Lower Dur, Akidda, and Krenstein's endurance temporarily by a couple of points as the result of this ordeal.) In the morning, the characters are suddenly released by the capricious authorities.

If the holos were explained as coming from Akidda's holographic recorder, of course, the police reaction is the same. Why do these offworlders know something? Time for extensive questioning, followed by their release and an official whitewashing of the "accident". (No ulterior motive is at work here — only the inefficiency of a bloated police bureaucracy which spends more time harassing innocent citizens than investigating actual crimes.)

SPECTRUM POLICE AUTHORITIES (Nugget)

Besides the possible first contact above, the characters may decide to visit the police later during the adventure. On their first visit, the police are polite but unhelpful; they

become annoyed if repeatedly bothered. Also, if the group shows excessive interest in the SSMM, mentions their status as Imperial knights, or otherwise tries to impress, it only makes things worse.

Despite evidence linking the terrorist activities to the SSMM found at each crime scene (see nuggets below), the police have no hard evidence, though the SSMM has long been believed to be a potentially subversive organization. Several clandestine raids on various communes (as well as intensive interrogations) have failed to produce a culprit.

The police have no details regarding the ambassador's mission, but they believe it may be some sort of government assignment.

MEDIA MAVENS (Nugget)

If contacted by the party, Lars Lonlo shows polite interest. If the group shows excessive interest in the SSMM, mentions their status as Imperial knights, or stays around the store after the shooting, Lars will have a major interest in them. If Akidda builds up a friendship (e.g., offers to collaborate, is willing to examine the other's writings, talks "shop"), then Lars will be a loyal and powerful ally. If the group shows they are working with the police, Lars will be suspicious.

Lars can often get access to information — or arrange interviews — that might otherwise be difficult to obtain.

MEDIA COVERAGE — AND A FRIEND (Early Nugget)

That evening, the incident receives major media coverage because the laser game blamed for the death is a first-edition product manufactured in a factory that is primarily robot-automated. In fact, this is one of the first game-making robot factories in use in this subsector, and this was the first serious "accident" involving the game.

As part of the same broadcast, a spokesman for the Society for the Sovereignty of Man over Machine is also interviewed by Lars Lonlo; he claims this horrible accident only proves that his group is correct in demanding that advanced machines be outlawed — and the more advanced, the tighter the prohibition and the steeper the penalties. In particular, he mentions that all robots should be dismantled and destroyed, and all scientists who create such things should be imprisoned or exiled. Members of the group recognize this "spokesman" (identified as Sendal Warenj in the broadcast) as their new-found "friend", the Solomani ambassador — back again on Spectrum!

Lars Lonlo suggests to the ambassador that the woman's death was not accidental, and asks him if the SSMM was responsible for the accident. Warenj denies any such thing, and ends the interview in a huff. In fact, Lonlo has unfounded suspicions, and was only trying to goad the SSMM spokesman into making an unexpected admission.

In fact, one of the clues not publicized by the police was the fact that an SSMM anti-robotic propaganda pamphlet was found in the control panel for the game. If the characters were questioned by the police, or if they looked at the controls themselves, then they know of this.

Our four characters, on a sightseeing tour of Spectrum, have observed the "accidental" death of an innocent bystander, someone whose death apparently postponed Dr. Krenstein's own demise. Shocked by the proximity of such an unexpected tragedy and the unusual participation of the Solomani ambassador, the group is likely to suspect something more than just an accident. Is some individual or group responsible? Could Dr. Krenstein or Aybee have been the intended target, and if so, are they still in danger? Meanwhile, the group is stranded until their ship can be repaired.

At this point, the group can decide its general course of action. They may wish to remain uninvolved (though the media threats by the SSMM against robotics scientists should discourage that), or to try to investigate the murder, with or without official sanctions. The police, the media, the university, and the SSMM itself are all possible sources of information, as described in further nuggets below. Various nuggets cover specific events which may take place; they are not necessarily presented in chronological order. More information about the SSMM on Spectrum can also be found in the nugget below.

THE SOCIETY FOR THE SOVEREIGNTY OF MAN OVER MACHINE (Background Nugget)

The SSMM, popular on many worlds in the Solomani Rim area, preaches the importance of the individual human over the capabilities of man-made artifacts. Individual chapters of the group, while adhering to this basic premise, vary greatly in their implementation of it. On some worlds, the SSMM is militantly anti-technology, practicing a primitive terrorism against scientific targets. On other worlds, it is little more than a think tank, a motley collection of dissatisfied failures who cry out against a supposed loss of man's spiritual nature in the face of the mechanical juggernaut.

On Spectrum, the SSMM is most similar to a religious commune. Members live together, striving for economic self-sufficiency without using certain technologies. While the SSMM on some worlds can be so luddite that no machines at all are allowed, on Spectrum the SSMM disdains only machines that rely on computer artificial intelligence, including expert systems and most robots.

In various large cities and rural areas, the SSMM has its "local headquarters", each housing 20 to 100 individuals, with all the branches coordinated as necessary by a central committee consisting of one representative from each branch. In the cities, most members of the communes have regular jobs, and they pool their incomes to provide not only for day-to-day needs but also for any proselytizing being done. The rural communes are small farming communities, for the most part self-sufficient and proud of it.

CONTACTING THE SSMM (Nugget)

Sooner or later, the characters may want to pay a visit to the local SSMM and the mysterious Solomani ambassador, who is a longtime member of the group and its apparent leader. While the SSMM people are friendly as long as Krenstein's and Aybee's identities are unknown, there is, they apologize, absolutely no way that the characters can speak with the Solomani ambassador, as he is a very busy man.

If your players are of the suspicious sort, play this up as much as you like. The characters may even resort to breaking in, or otherwise forcing an audience with the ambassador. This type of ploy will gain them little other than more attention from the local police — another trip downtown, some more interrogation, and the eventual release a few days later after the ambassador decides they have learned a lesson.

In fact, what the members of the commune say is true — the ambassador *is* a busy man, and doesn't have time to chitchat with every visitor who comes knocking at the door. Besides, he knows nothing of the terrorism and is justifiably concerned at the negative publicity this is causing for the SSMM.

AN ACADEMIC INVITATION (Early Nugget)

Whenever Dr. Krenstein visits Spectrum University for the first time, Tarkis K'tal offers to conduct a guided tour of the campus of any duration desired. Proud of his university's facilities, the enthusiastic regent also talks about the continuing growth of Spectrum as a subsector economic center, mentioning that the New Town Starport should be upgraded to Class D status in the next three to five years.

(If Dr. Krenstein dawdles in contacting the university, then K'tal contacts Krenstein first, expecting a visit from the roboticist soon since he wrote ahead from an earlier stop that he would be travelling to the planet.)

K'tal comments that Dr. Brion Steu attended the 1104 Shudusham Robotics Conference, just as Dr. Krenstein did (see *Travellers' Digest* Adventure 8 for the details). K'tal would be happy to arrange a meeting between Krenstein and Steu, if desired. K'tal also invites Krenstein to speak at a workshop the university will be hosting in two weeks. Krenstein would be welcome as a distinguished speaker on robotics and treated as a guest of honor. The rest of the group would also be welcome, of course.

If Krenstein immediately accepts, K'tal is pleased and sees to all the necessary arrangements. If Krenstein refuses or asks to think it over, K'tal expresses his disappointment, and asks Krenstein to reconsider. K'tal will do whatever he can (within reason) to entice Krenstein to attend. Steu also works to insure that the famed roboticist plans to come to the workshop and speak.

The nugget encounter with Steu can be found below.

ONCE IS AN ACCIDENT—BUT TWICE? (Timed Nugget)

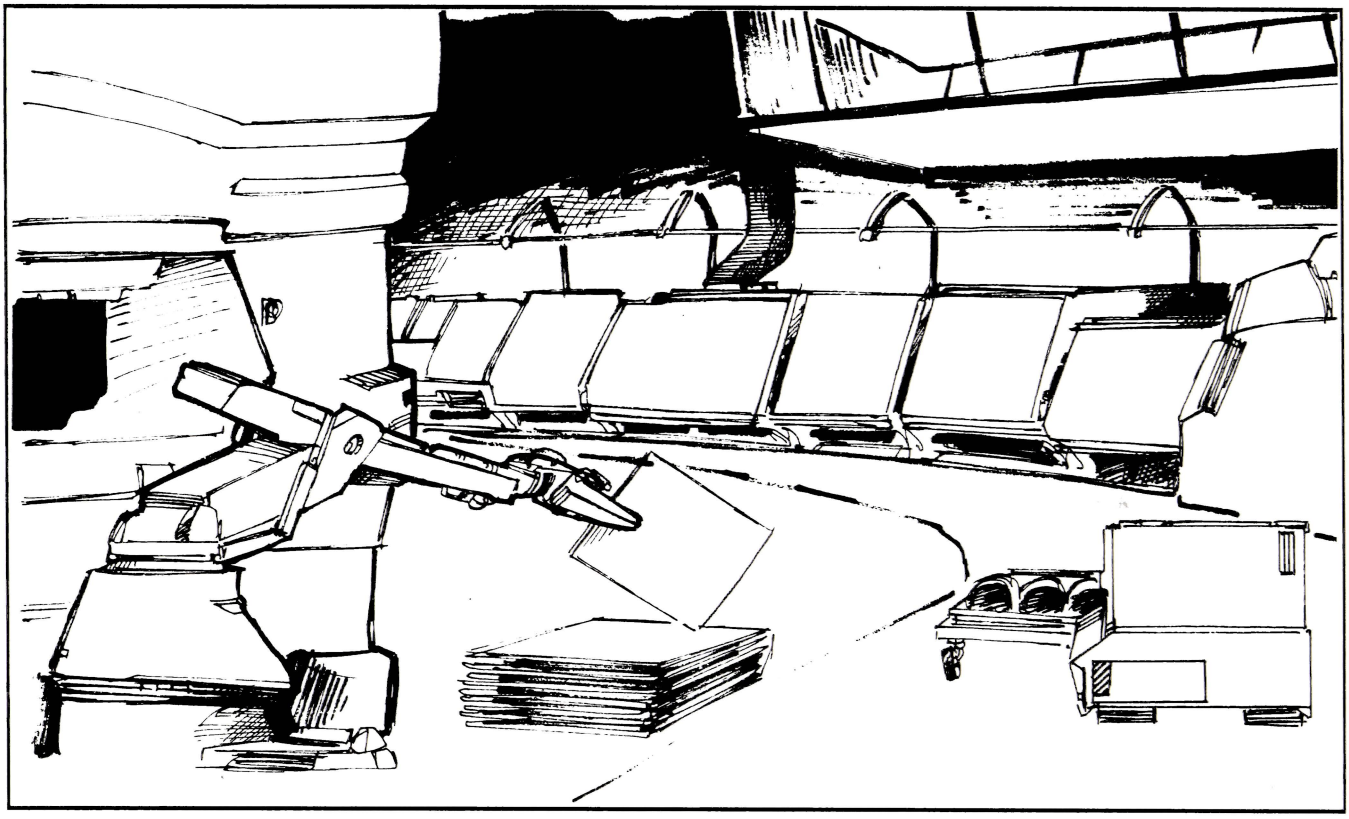
Three days after the laser-game incident, one of the characters sees a media report about a serious accident in a groundcar manufacturing plant. Three workers were killed, several assembly robots were destroyed, and the plant was forced to close for several hours. The next day, the spokesman from the SSMM makes another media pitch against the use of high technology and robots in factories, blaming the accidents on "unreliable machines that threaten humaniti by their steel-brained, unfeeling destructive impulses."

What the news reports do not say, because the police haven't revealed it, is that another SSMM tract was found at the "accident". Lars Lonlo, though, has a nose for news, and wonders on the air whether the SSMM is involved in the accidents. He speculates that the cult is dissatisfied with its earlier Fabian tactics and is now engaged in "new terrorism" to force the government's hand in taking action against what the SSMM calls "machines of death". Lonlo's ratings go up, and he privately hopes that more such incidents occur (he won't be disappointed).

If the characters visited the plant, they could learn of the clue pointing to the SSMM.

A CASE OF PETTY THEFT (Timed Nugget)

Several days later, while no one from the group is in their sleeping quarters, someone breaks in through a window and rifles through Dr. Krenstein's robotics kit. The kit's entire contents have been dumped on the floor of the room



in total disarray, and numerous holographic crystals used for long-term memory storage of Aybee's holorecorder are missing. Careful examination outside the window shows where a single crystal was dropped and splintered. The stolen crystals have no intrinsic worth, but they contained almost two months' worth of recorded images, now irreplaceable.

This incident is a red herring: nothing more than a random act of senseless vandalism.

LET THEM STEU FOR A WHILE (Nugget)

When Dr. Krenstein (and the other characters, perhaps) visit Dr. Brion Steu at Spectrum University, he is pleased to find that Steu's reputation as a roboticist is justified. In fact, it's hard to understand why Steu hasn't moved to a world with a higher tech level and a better university. If asked about this, Steu quietly explains that the government of Spectrum has deemed him an "important person", restricting his right to emigrate. He considered never returning when he visited Shudusham last year, but thought better of the idea since he would have to leave his family behind.

Steu's research involves ultraminiaturization of mechanical devices, using cryogenics to reduce friction and allow heat dissipation. Steu is particularly proud of one of his graduate students, Jalir Paninwahl, whose doctoral project involves remote-controlled cryomechanical applications.

Steu calls up Paninwahl on the campus communication network, and asks him if it would be all right to bring some visitors to see his work. Paninwahl readily agrees, but when the group gets to Paninwahl's laboratory, he is nowhere to be found. Steu apologizes for the misunderstanding, and demonstrates some of Paninwahl's results himself. Krenstein agrees that Paninwahl is a brilliant young scientist, with a promising future ahead of him. Using what he calls "local cryomechanics", Paninwahl has created a high-speed drill able to bore a one-millimeter hole in sheet steel, yet the entire drill could easily rest on a man's thumbnail.

If Krenstein has not already agreed to visit the workshop to be held shortly, Steu does all he can to encourage him. (In point of fact, if the player understands Krenstein's personality, there should be little hesitation on his part.)

WORKSHOP CONFRONTATION (Nugget)

If Dr. Krenstein and his party decide to attend the Spectrum robotics workshop, the university will provide complimentary passes, meals, and overnight lodging to Krenstein and his party. Approximately 650 persons attend the three-day workshop, including 50 guest speakers and various convention promoters and sponsors.

Outside the university's conference center, where the workshop is being held, are about 20 protesters from the SSMM, carrying signs and handing out leaflets complaining of the harm done to mankind by scientists and workshops such as these. If the party looks through this crowd, they do not recognize anyone — neither the ambassador nor the killer from the store.

The workshop promises to be fascinating, with top scientists and researchers from all over Spectrum speaking on their latest progress. While much of the material is less interesting to Krenstein (because he was trained at a higher tech level), the other attendees treat him as visiting royalty because of the renown he has in his field. Any speech he makes is received with thunderous applause and enthusiasm, and many congratulatory remarks are interspersed in the question and answer session after his talk.

Another centerpiece of the conference is the work of Steu's brilliant protégé, Jalir Paninwahl, in the field of microminiaturization. Paninwahl himself cannot attend the conference, unfortunately, as he has suddenly taken ill.

While at the workshop, two incidents mar the otherwise staid proceedings.

Incident 1: An elevator carrying attendees from a vendor reception room on the twelfth floor down to the lobby fails; three scientists are injured after the backup system does not slow the car down sufficiently during the fall. Technicians called to repair the elevator find another SSMM brochure where the sabotage occurred: this accident was no accident. Later on, the ambassador is on the news again, denying any involvement whatsoever. Lars Lonlo harangues some more about this "new terrorism", and reports that the local authorities have arrested some SSMM members in relation to this incident.

In fact, the police have no leads; they are going after innocent people more for the public appearance of working on the case than for any other reason.

Incident 2: A player character *other than Aybee* sees the missing killer at the conference, vaguely disguised with a black wig and moustache. Again, the suspect gets clean away. If your players would enjoy a chase, then generate UTPs for the ongoing task and have at it, but at this point, let him get away, and do not allow Aybee to take holographs or the plot is solved too easily. (Aybee can join in the chase if the suspect is far enough ahead to be out of range.)

FOLLOW-UP TO THE WORKSHOP (Nugget)

Security at the workshop was fairly tight; no one without a proper invitation should have been able to attend. This narrows the suspect list down to fewer than 700 people. The characters should feel hot on the trail now — and rightly so (this is a high population world, after all).

If they wish, they can get a list of attendees from Steu or another coordinator at the university. This list can be turned over to the authorities, who will of course promise to get photos or holos of each of these individuals and let the characters look through them. This will, again of course, take more than a little time. The characters are asked to stay in town (again, the unwarranted suspicion of anyone with knowledge even vaguely related to a crime); the police will notify them when the mug shots are ready.

Meanwhile, the characters may realize that the SSMM terrorist could be known to Steu, who was acquainted with many of his professional colleagues who attended the workshop. When they show Aybee's holograph of the man in the blue sweater to Steu, he lets out an immediate gasp of recognition. The terrorist is his student, Jalir Paninwahl.

Rushing to his apartment, they find it deserted — Paninwahl has fled. On the workbench in his study, beside his toolbox, are notes and diagrams detailing the construction of a bomb. Tacked up on the walls of the room are various flyers, news printouts, and photographs relating to local SSMM activities.

One photograph shows a smiling middle-aged woman, posed in front of a simple tractor. The photograph is signed "Love, Mom". Tacked beside it is an obituary report, detailing the rather ordinary life of Louisa Paninwahl, who "died at

peace at her home, staying true to her belief in the sovereignty of man and the evil of those who would subjugate him to the minds of simple machines".

AFTER THE KILLER (Concluding Nugget)

Presuming that the party notifies the police or rushes to the local SSMM commune, the killer can be stopped in time. Depending upon the interests of your players, this can be played out in a variety of ways. At one extreme, the solution results from a simple deduction, and the characters catch the killer in the act of planting the bomb and he repents of his wrongdoing and gives himself up. At the other extreme, the killer can be holed up in one of the commune's buildings and a nasty shootout can ensue, eventually resulting in the death of the terrorist but still requiring that the party disarm the bomb before it goes off. Generate UTPs as needed for whichever eventuality you think your players would prefer.

A lazy party, or one unable to solve the puzzle, might do nothing, or satisfy themselves with notifying the plodding police and letting them handle it. In this case, the bomb goes off, killing many innocent people, and while the police might have a good lead, the characters have made no friends.

On the other hand, characters that put on a good show will certainly impress a certain Solomani ambassador, who does belong to this commune and will be eager to reward the party for its able assistance. The Scout ship will in this case be repaired at the regular rates, and the ambassador will forward a letter to the emperor and the Moot at Capital, lauding the characters for upholding the highest standards of Imperial knighthood both in their many kindnesses to him and in saving his life from a terrorist bomb.

REFEREE'S NOTES (Explanatory Nugget)

The following information describes the "real" roles of the SSMM, the terrorist, and the ambassador.

The SSMM: The Society for the Sovereignty of Man over Machine on Spectrum is not responsible for any of the incidents so widely attributed to them. In fact, their membership on this world consists solely of a few thousand malcontents who listen for spectacular or unusual accidents where equipment of advanced technology may have been at fault, then blow them out of proportion. By doing so, they exploit the situation to attract media attention and (ideally) gain public sympathy for their position. This approach has met with limited success. While such actions are certainly uncouth and antisocial, no member has ever been responsible for causing any of these accidents. In fact, not one crime has been committed by any member to advance their group's movement. They are opportunists only, not terrorists.

Revenge of a Son: Jalir Paninwahl's mother was a member of a SSMM farm commune. As such, when she fell ill she refused to be examined by a medical expert system, and although her disease would have been easily curable, she died. Paninwahl vowed at her grave that he would avenge her death by destroying the SSMM, and slowly but surely he has been attempting to embarrass the group.

Jalir's idea of a good time is sabotaging a piece of technical equipment, hoping to cause injury or death, and leaving behind a clue pointing to the SSMM. He hopes that public reaction will result in the government's cracking down on the SSMM: in the past, minority groups on Spectrum have not fared well when looked down upon by the authorities.

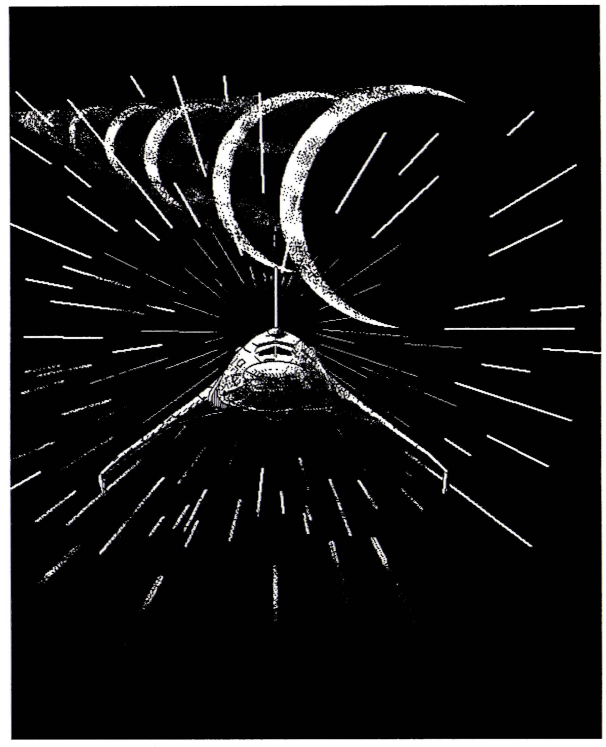
The Ambassador and Other Red Herrings: The Solomani ambassador, feeling somewhat chagrined for his unkindly treatment of the group, had an unexpected attack of "conscience". He arranged for the parts and repairs, then finished his business on Ungarn (the world to which the group had transported him). Finished with his business, he hopped a jump-5 courier and returned to Spectrum, his home. He does not wish to make contact with the group (frankly, he is a little embarrassed), but is willing to help by getting their ship fixed.

The unfortunate theft and subsequent damage of Dr. Krenstein's holographic crystals is an unrelated incident, a simple act of vandalism with no connection to the main plot.

The referee is encouraged to produce as many other false leads as he likes in order to make things as interesting as possible for the group. Given the precarious relationships between the police, the university, the media, and the SSMM, it should not be too difficult to weave as intricate a web of intrigue as desired.

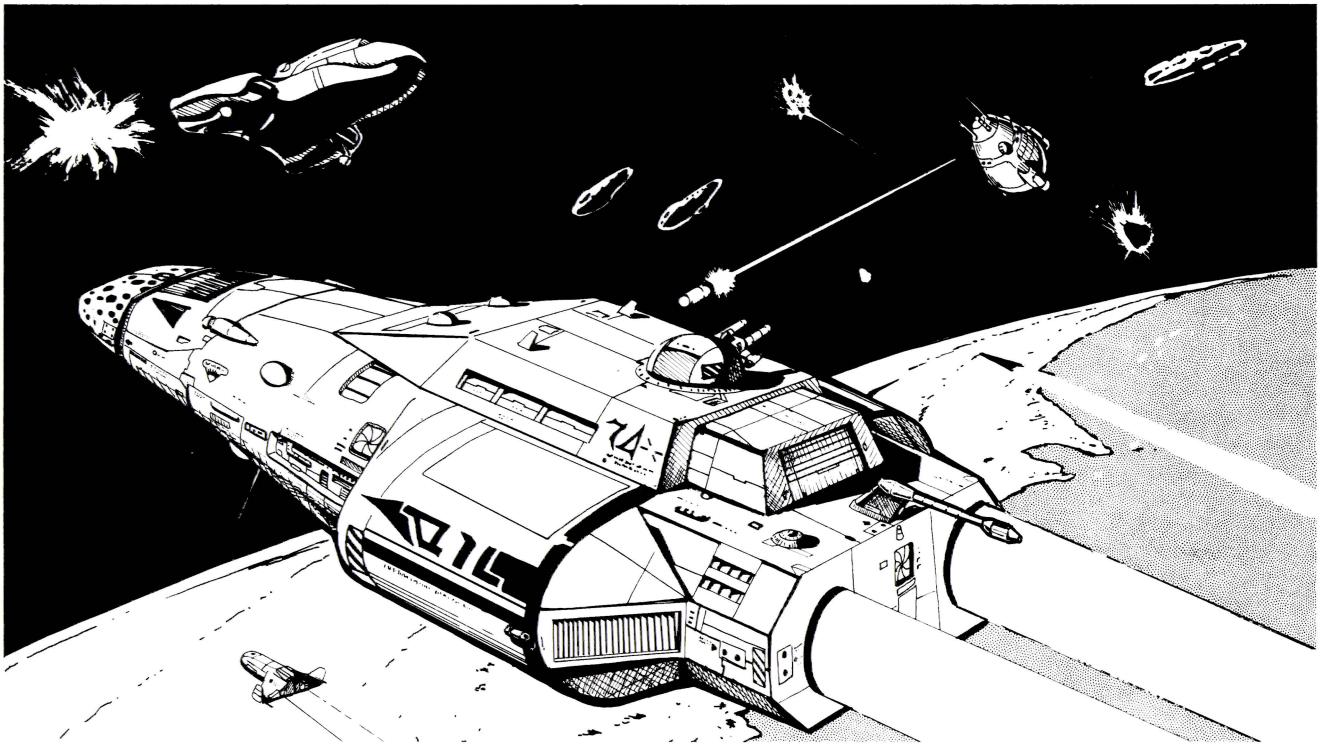
IN CONCLUSION (Final Nugget)

After three weeks have passed, the necessary parts (and a full engineering crew from the Solomani Navy) arrive at New Town Starport. The Andante Polaris is repaired in another week's time, and the group is free to leave any time after that.•



GHOST SHIP

MEGATRAVELLER
—by William W. Connors



The first in a series of four **MegaTraveller** adventures by William W. Connors

THE PLACE

This series of adventures begins on Aki/Glisten/Spinward Marches (2035 B443987-9)

THE TIME

This adventure begins early in the year 1117. News of the assassination of Strephon and his heirs has reached Aki, as have reports that the Aslan have begun to move into the rimward regions of the Spinward Marches; these local events are more a matter of concern than the distant events at the Imperial core.

THE PLAYER CHARACTERS

The events in this adventure center around the crew of the free trader *El-ahrairah* (or just "*Rah*" for short). *Rah* is a typical free trader design, and mounts a pair of single beam lasers for self-defense.

Her crew, with the exception of Drakob, are all from Glisten Subsector. Exact information on the crew members is as follows:

Kane Woodlow (Owner)
879857 Age 38 5 terms Cr75,000
Navigation-3, Broker-2, Computer-2, Legal-2, Liaison-2, Pilot-1
Starport C, Medium, Dense, Dry, Mod Pop, Low Law, Early Stellar

Kane is a native of the Windsor system who signed on to the crew of a tramp freighter when he was a young man. Instantly infected with a great love of the trader's life, he has proven himself to be a skilled merchant. Kane is a cunning businessman who takes good care of his crew. "After all," he says," they're my most valuable commodity."

Belinn Woodlow (Pilot)
5B5746 Age 34 5 terms Cr75,000
Pilot-4, Electronics-2, Prospecting-2, Mechanical-1, Vacc Suit-1
Starport A, Asteroid, Vacuum, Desert, High Pop, Mod Law, Hi Stellar

Belinn is a former belter from the Glisten system. She is the wife of Kane Woodlow. Although her overly tall and slender physique makes her less than a classic beauty, she is an attractive woman with a natural talent for starship operation. Although Belinn sometimes misses her life as a prospector, she is happy in her role as *Rah*'s pilot.

Dell Makkashi (Engineer)
76AA78 Age 30 4 terms Cr20,000
Engineer-3, Electronic-2, Gravitics-2, Mechanical-2, Brawling-1, Handgun-1
Starport B, Medium, Thin, Wet, Mod Pop, Mod Law, Average Stellar

Dell, a native of the New Rome system, met Kane Woodlow when they both worked aboard the trader *Blue Foxx*. They became close and later struck out together. When Kane's business expertise earned him the money he needed to purchase *El-ahrairah*, it was simply assumed that Dell would be the ship's engineer. Dell is a quiet, gentle man who has always been fascinated with any type of mechanism.

Tynna Yovanne (Steward/Gunner)
6958A8 Age 24 1.5 terms Cr16,000
Gunnery-2, Steward-2, Liaison-1
Starport C, Medium, Dense, Dry, Mod pop, Low Law, Early Stellar

Like Kane, Tynna is from Windsor. She signed aboard *El-ahrairah* several months ago to "see the universe." Her friendly, open nature and physical good looks have made her a popular addition to the crew. Her skill as a gunner has come in handy on several occasions and Kane feels that her salary is good insurance. Tynna is always willing to embrace new ideas and consider points of view which might be alien to her.

Drakob Ferassis (Medic)
65A9BB Age 46 8 terms Cr50,000
Admin-3, Medical-3, Computer-2, History-2, Biology-1, Liaison-1
Starport C, Small, Vacuum, Desert, Low Pop, No Law, Average Stellar

Drakob is from Arba in the Lunion subsector. He has travelled throughout the Spinward Marches, serving as a medical officer aboard numerous vessels. On the average, he has remained with each employer for only a few jumps. Lately, however, he feels very comfortable aboard the *Rah* and plans to stay with Kane and his crew for at least the near future.

STOPOVER AT AKI

The adventure opens with the free trader *El-ahrairah* resting quietly at Aki Telmar starport. Although it is something of a "frontier" facility by Imperial standards, it is the pride of the Aki system.

The crew of *Rah* has found a good price on 50 displacement tons of locally manufactured electronic components. In keeping with standard Imperial commerce procedures, the cargo is registered with the port authority under the code "B-9 Hi In Po Cr5,000".

After an exchange of electronic paperwork, the crew of the free trader accepts delivery of the goods from the manufacturer and spends most of the day transferring the cargo from the delivery trucks to their hold. With their work completed, they retire to the lounge for a well deserved cold drink.

THE WINDS OF WAR

The ship's computer informs the crew that an emergency broadcast signal is being received from the the starport authority.

As *Rah*'s crew watches the holodisplay, the face of an older man appears. The characters do not recognize him, but a burst of text under his picture identifies him as Brant Thestar, chief administrator of the Commonwealth of Aki.

"Citizens of Aki, I stand before you today with grave news. Less than an hour ago, our Planetary Defense Fleet detected the transition of numerous alien vessels into our solar system. The vessels are of Aslan design and we must conclude that, as we have expected since the tragic news from the Core was received, an Ihatei fleet has set its sights on Aki.

"It has been the stated policy of this government that there is no place for Aslan colonists on this world. With our population already at 7 billion and every corner of our globe under our own control, the Aslan will have to look elsewhere for new lands to settle. I know that you all support me on this difficult day.

"Messages have been sent to the Aslan craft warning them that a continued approach to our world will be seen as an act of war. If this turns out to be the case, the Planetary Defense Fleet will be more than able to turn away these unwanted immigrants."

With that, the image fades and a text display announces that all craft currently in the starport have been grounded for the duration of this crisis: the skies must be kept clear for "official" traffic.

The characters had had no idea that the public opinion was so anti-Aslan. The Aki fleet and starport, while excellent examples of tech 9 construction, do not stand a very good chance against a technologically superior Aslan force.

Attempts by the players to persuade the local authorities that confronting the Aslan fleet is ill advised will be met with polite but firm rejection.

BATTLE ABOVE AKI

Less than an hour later, the two fleets meet high above Aki. As *Rah*'s crew watches on the ship's sensors, the Aslan fleet, intent on reaching Aki, moves resolutely forward. As the Aslan ships cross the 100 diameter line, the Aki Planetary Defense fleet opens fire. After a few initial hits by the local forces, the tide of battle turns. The superior technology and firepower of the Aslan fleet make short work of the Planetary Defense Fleet.

The planetary defense batteries rumble in the distance. Once again, the Aslan ships suffer a few hits from this barrage, but quickly firm up their defenses. As the Aslan begin to fire selective bursts at the various surface stations attacking them, they also dispatch a wave of fighters. Trajectory projections leave little doubt that their target is the starport. One by one, over the impotent protests of the local authorities, commercial and private ships leap skyward to avoid the destruction. No doubt, the characters will join the flood of escaping starships as the first Aslan fighters open fire on the port facilities.

ESCAPE FROM AKI

As *Rah* hurtles through the clouds, they are inadvertently targeted by one of the planetary defense batteries. The ship's sensors suddenly light up, showing a salvo of incoming Aki missiles.

Estimates indicate that the missile volley will not reach the ship until after it has crossed the 10 diameter limit, allowing them to make a "dangerous" jump instead of a "desperate" one. Referees should play up the tension, fudging rolls as required to make sure that the ship will be able to jump as soon as it crosses the all important 10 diameter line.

Unfortunately, the estimates assume that the missiles will detonate on contact. In actuality, they are proximity fused warheads.

Thus, with all hands ready for a jump and a close escape, the missiles suddenly detonate before expected. As the shockwave hits the ship and warning lights come on across the bridge, the ship makes its tumble into jumpspace.

Over the next few hours, the entire crew of the trader falls victim to the nausea which so often marks a misjump.

TROUBLE

A wise crew will go on very tight rations and operate all systems at reduced levels to conserve power.

Damage to the ship is severe. The jump drive and maneuver drive are all but destroyed and cannot be repaired without weeks in a good starport. The power plant, although slightly damaged, is still in good operating condition.

Although multiple hull punctures in the aft quarter have made use of the ship's lanthanum grid a risky proposition, the ship's protective jump field envelope is still intact.

After a tense 10 day wait, the ship suddenly flings itself out of jump space some 100 diameters from the surface of a main sequence orange star. After another bout with jump sickness, the crew can assess their situation.

THE NIRTON SYSTEM

Communications picks up the signal of an Imperial Navy interdiction beacon:

"You are in the Imperial interdicted system of Nirton, a red travel zone. This system has a dangerously unstable star and a gas giant whose atmosphere is clouded with debris, making refueling more dangerous than usual. Please refuel carefully and leave this system at once. Your ship's transponder ID is being recorded by insystem beacons. Failure to leave this system as ordered can mean your vessel will be subject to impoundment by Imperial Navy forces, and you could be subject to a fine of up to Cr500,000. By order of the Imperial Navy, Spinward Marches, District 268, 1105."

A quick check of the ship's library computer gives the following information:

"The Nirton System was only briefly explored during the early colonization of the Spinward Marches. Since then, it has been of little or no importance in the evolution of the Marches.

"Nirton's primary is a K8-V star named Azuthin. The system has only a thin planetoid belt and a single small gas giant. The gas giant, named Maklin, has a few asteroid moons and a single larger one.

"The larger moon, Nirton, is just under 10,000 kilometers in diameter. It has no atmosphere or surface ice. Its lack of valuable ores or resources makes it little more than a useless rock.

"The system has been interdicted by the Imperial Navy because of its chaotic star. Heavy solar flare activity makes deadly bursts of radiation a frequent occurrence. The low amount of debris in the system's asteroid belt has given rise to the hypothesis that it was once a solid planetary body shattered by millenia of solar flare activity.

"Even as a refueling stop, the Nirton system is undesirable. Large amounts of particulate matter drift above Maklin's surface. Although a normal purification plant will make fuel skimmed from this location safe for use, impacts with the unusual debris can cause severe damage to refueling ships.

"The Nirton system is frequently swept by cometary bodies. It is possible that the contamination in Maklin's atmosphere is the result of numerous cometary impacts over the centuries."

A CRY FOR HELP

A survey of the ship's supplies reveals that the crew has rations enough for another 40 days if they conserve. Their fuel supply will power the ship's systems for somewhat longer. To make matters worse, *Rah*'s trajectory is such that it is headed deep into the system, dangerously close to the flaring central star, with a maneuver drive that is not in operating condition.

The computer carries out routine sensor scans of the system. As expected, nothing new is turned up.

Just over a day later, however, the monotony of sullen waiting is broken by a signal from the computer. A faint radio signal has reached the ship from an unknown transmitter in the inner Nirton system. Careful manipulation of the communications array can produce a more distinct and legible signal.

To boost the incoming signal:
Difficult, Sensor Op, Int, 1 minute (safe, unskilled OK)
Referee: Remember that Kane's Navigation skill can serve as Sensor Op–1

Once the signal has been successfully amplified, it presents what appears to be a cryptic plea for aid:

". . . destroyed . . . require . . . assistance . . . Signal GK . . . *Sword of Arbellatra* . . . have . . . and are . . .power plant and other . . . require . . . repeating . . ."

The signal is broken by background hiss and static. Better reception is impossible due to the intense solar radiation and the weakness of the signal. As the characters wait, the message seems to repeat over and over again. Attempts to contact the other vessel for help are fruitless. For one reason or another, no one responds to any action taken by the crew of *El-ahrairah.*

The signal's source is a seemingly dead starship trapped in one of the star's Trojan points. There is no telling how long the craft has been here. *Rah* would have overlooked the distress signal if a fairly substantial cometary body had not come between the star and *Rah*, silhouetting *Arbellatra* for several hours. Only when *Arbellatra* came between *Rah* and the cometary body did the ship's sensors pick up the faint whisper of its transmitter.

Computer inquiries will reveal no information about the starship *Sword of Arbellatra.* After a few hours, *Arbellatra*'s transmission is again lost in the high radio noise of the system. The group, however, will have been able to get a fix on *Arbellatra*'s position.

OPTIONS

In lieu of doing nothing, the characters may now seek some means of making the journey to the other starship. Without a functioning maneuver drive, however, they will find this to be a most challenging task.

With great effort, they can attempt makeshift repairs of the crippled maneuver drive. Because of their lack of parts, they must scavenge not only the electronic components in the hold, but also some of the ship's internal gravitic plates (providing only 25% as much thrust per square meter as true thrusters — this includes the 50% penalty for deep-space grav plate thrust) or perhaps some portions of the inertial compensators (only 10% thrust). In the end, the job will require the following tasks:

To design the jury-rigged thrusters:
Difficult, Engineering or Gravitics, Edu, 1 hour
Referee: This task assumes that the characters are willing to scavenge parts as described above. If they try to cut corners, it increases to Formidable.

To construct the jury-rigged thrusters:
Difficult, Engineering or Gravitics, Dex, 1 day
Referee: As with the design task, this assumes a willingness to scavenge parts from many areas of Rah itself. If this is not the case, task difficulty increases to Formidable.

It may occur to the crew to use this maneuver drive to send their ship on a sub-light trajectory toward the nearest inhabited system while they go into low berths. However, their power would fail years before they arrived.

A MOVING EXPERIENCE

Once the drive is designed and on-line, the ship can brake its current velocity, and alter its course toward Arbellatra. Because of the chaotic nature of its construction, and the fact that many of its components are not intended for such heavy duty use, no more than 0.1 gee acceleration can be obtained. At this speed, the passage to the other craft will take just over five days . Flying the ship is not easy because of the jury-rigged nature of the thrusters and the pilot must succeed at the following task:

To pilot *Rah* using the jury-rigged thrusters:
Difficult, Pilot, Engineering, Ed
Referee: The pilot and engineer may combine their DMs on this task. This task should be attempted several times during the trip: once for the braking phase of the current velocity and vector, once for the acceleration phase of the new course, once for the mid-point turn around, and once for the braking phase. Failure on any of the rolls indicates the jury-rigged system has broken down. Repairs are possible using the original design and construction tasks if the players specify cautious attempts. Otherwise the repair tasks are automatically Formidable.

CLOSER OBSERVATION

As *Rah* closes on the other ship, continued sensor scans can reveal a great deal of additional information. The first item of new data which becomes available is a complete transcript of the garbled radio distress call which *Sword of Arbellatra* has been sending. In full it reads:

". . . Signal GK, Signal GK. This is the Imperial Courier *Sword of Arbellatra*. We have fallen under attack and are in need of help. Our power plant, maneuver drive, and several other systems are destroyed. We require immediate assistance. Repeating. . ."

Televisual examination reveals that the craft looks much like a patrol cruiser of rather old design. A small solar power receptor has been assembled which looks every bit as jury-rigged as *El-ahrairah*'s new thruster plates. As the ship seems to radiate no energy other than its radio signal, it would seem that the receptor was constructed to provide power for the distress beacon.

The body of the ship shows signs of a hard-fought battle. Each of her four turrets has been hit, as have the bridge and drive sections. In all cases, the damage is so severe that it looks as though repairs may be impossible.

The last thing which the crew notices is the unusual symbol on the side of the craft. Set on the white hull is a black short sword which is speckled with white stars and overlaid by a white Imperial Sunburst. A check of the *Rah*'s library program reveals no information on this crest. Have Drakob's player roll the following task:

To guess what the symbol on *Arbellatra*'s hull means:
Routine, Int, Edu (uncertain)
Referee: On total truth and success, or some truth and exceptional success, pass Drakob's player a note declaring he thinks the symbol is the standard of an order of knighthood. It is important to note that, if it does belong to an order of Imperial knights, the fact that it is not recorded in the ship's library files is unusual.

RENDEZVOUS

The two starships come to a halt (relative to each other) at a distance of roughly 1 km. Travel from one ship to the other is fairly easy and should present no real difficulty to the characters. An exploration of the other craft presents the travellers with much information about the *Sword of Arbellatra*.

There are numerous bodies spread throughout the ship. All of them are in combat armor and all have been mummified by extended exposure to vacuum. This is one indicator of the age of the derelict.

Roughly one-quarter of the bodies are wearing jet black armor with the sword and sunburst heraldry of the hull over the left breast. Because of their emblems and the locations of these bodies, it seems that these are the ship's crew and that they were engaged in an attempt to repel boarders. Each member of the "crew" has his or her name stenciled on the front of his armor under the sword and sunburst. Each seems to have been, in fact, a knight. Searching *Rah*'s library computer for the various names on the bodies of the crew turns up nothing.

The other bodies are those of Imperial marines in old-style armor. They bear the markings of a company of Ship's Troops assigned to the vessel *Gallachi*. A check with the *Rah*'s computer will turn up an entry which describes the *Gallachi* as "an example of the 600-ton *Henderson* class corvette which was decommissioned in 824 following extensive damage during action on the frontier". Dates on the various merit shields and insignia on the marine bodies all date to the same period of time. Attempts to trace the names of the marines whose bodies litter the *Sword of Arbellatra* bring, without exception, the entry: "Died during peace keeping actions in 824 aboard *INS Gallachi*. Body buried in space."

The damage to the *Arbellatra*'s systems is quite extensive, and repairs to *Arbellatra* seem to be out of the question unless drastic measures are taken.

DRASTIC MEASURES

Repair of the jump drive aboard *El-ahrairah* is impossible, even using parts salvaged from aboard the derelict *Sword of Arbellatra*. By the same token, repair of the power plant and maneuver drive aboard *Arbellatra* is impossible even with the salvaging of parts from *Rah*. It would seem, at first, that the castaways are in no better shape now than they were when they received *Arbellatra*'s summons.

Further examination of the situation (along with a little prodding from the referee, if required) will eventually bring the players to conclude that A: they must link the two ships together in some manner in order to escape the Nirton system, or else B:they must move their entire power plant to the *Arbellatra*.

Option A: The ships must be linked in numerous ways for their escape to become reality. First, a physical brace must be built which will securely hold the two craft together

and allow the lanthanum grids in the hulls to operate as one unit when power is applied.

The second link must occur between the drive sections of the two craft. Power from the still operational fusion plant aboard *Rah* must be fed into the energy sink arrays in both ships. The stored energy must be distributed along the linked hull grids of the two ships to open a passage into jumpspace.

The third link must be made from the bridge of the *Elahrairah* to the control systems aboard the *Sword of Arbellatra* so that Kane and Belinn will be able to fly the combined ships from their position aboard *Rah*.

The following tasks must be attempted to design the various links:

To design the bracing structure to mate the two ships:
Routine, Engineering or Mechanical, Edu, 1 hour (uncertain)
Referee: Some truth results indicate a hidden flaw which may cause a mishap during construction. No truth results indicate that the design is faulty and it will be impossible to build the link as intended. The system will have to be redesigned from scratch.

To design the power link between the two ships:
Routine, Engineering or Electronics, Edu, 1 hour (uncertain)
Referee: as above

To design the control link to operate the two ships:
Routine, Computer or Electronics, Edu, 1 hour (uncertain)
Referee: as above

Option B: To place the power plant of the smaller *Rah* aboard the *Arbellatra* will require removing inner walls aboard both ships to take it out through the hold doors and in the corresponding doors on the other ship. It will have to be situated in the most convenient large space and linked to the *Arbellatra*'s jump grid and fuel tanks. This also means that the crew will have to live on the *Arbellatra*, since life support also depends on that power. They could charge batteries for storage for a few days only.

To repair *Arbellatra* for crew residence:
Routine, Mechanical, Dex, 2 hours

To clear the path for the power plant:
Routine, Mechanical, AVG (Str, Dex), 1 hour

To power down and detach the power plant from *Rah*:
Difficult, Eng, Int, 30 min

To maneuver the plant from *Rah* to *Arbellatra*:
Routine, Vacc Suit, End, 10 min, (hazardous)
Referee: Mishaps may damage the plant or catch a player between the plant and the wall of the ship

To connect the power plant to *Arbellatra*'s system:
Difficult, Eng, Int, 30 min.

GHOST SHIP

As the plans for escape are underway, Tynna has time to explore the wreck. Without the technical skills to aid her shipmates in their tasks, both she and Drakob tend to get in the way. While she wanders through the empty corridors of *Arbellatra*, she comes face to face with a "someone". It looks just like a man in the black combat armor of Arbellatra's crew. Unlike the corpses, however, this man is transparent and "alive". As Tynna watches, the man reaches out to her and looks as if he is about to speak. Before he can do so, however, he fades out of sight and is gone. Pass Tynna's player a note describing this incident. Allow her player to report this incident to the other players however she wishes. The referee should encourage the other players to think Tynna is seeing things.

Although there is no physical evidence to support her claims that she "saw a ghost", Tynna has the distinct feeling that what she encountered was more than a hallucination. If she and Drakob were together, pass Drakob's player a note telling him he saw nothing unusual, even if Tynna directed his attention to the ghost before it faded. No matter what efforts Tynna makes to "prove" that the ghost exists, she will have no conclusive proof.

A check of the crew's bodies found aboard *Arbellatra* will allow Tynna to conclude that her ghost was that of Captain Sir Phaylenn, whose body will be found still secured to his command chair on the bridge. (Assuming, of course, that the crew of *Rah* has not already given the bodies proper space burial before the ghost appears!)

THE BRACE (Option A)

Once the links have been designed, they must be built. As with the jury-rigged thruster, this requires a great deal of scavenging for parts.

In order to mate the two ships physically, less important structural members must be repositioned aboard both craft and extensive networks of external bracing must be assembled between the two hulls. In order to construct the brace, the following task must be attempted:

To build the brace between the two ships:
Difficult, Engineering or Mechanical, Dex, 1 day (uncertain)
Referee: Some truth indicates a warning light situation when the brace is subjected to stress (i.e., when the ship moves). Worry the players a lot, but do not allow the brace to fail. A no truth result indicates a mishap during construction which may result in injury to the workers or further damage to the ships themselves.

THE POWER LINK

In order to construct the electronic network which will carry power between the two craft, the following task must be attempted:

To build the power conduit between the two ships:
Difficult, Engineering or Electronics, Dex, 1 day (uncertain)
Referee: same as brace task above

THE CONTROL LINK

The construction of the control link will allow the actions of both ships to be guided by the flight crew aboard *Elahrairah*. It is vital to the success of the escape plan and requires that the following task be attempted:

To build the control link:
Difficult, Computer or Electronics, Dex, 1 day (uncertain)
Referee: Some truth results show a fault in the assembly that will interfere with the proper impulse transmission and

cause a system shutdown upon activation. No truth indicates that an accident has taken place during the construction of the link.

THE GHOST RETURNS

Several days after her first encounter with the ghost, Tynna will again find herself confronted by it. Conduct this incident with Tynna's player by passing note cards back and forth between her player and you, the referee.

Tynna is looking into the mirror in her fresher when a voice from behind her speaks. "You must do your duty to Paula and her Imperium."

If Tynna turns around, she finds herself face to face with the spectre of Sir Phaylenn. He is less than two meters away from her, close enough to touch. If she tries to reach out to the figure, she finds that there is nothing there. With a look of intense concentration, the ghost speaks again.

"We have been betrayed. You must take back word of this treason and . . ." As the phantom's words fade away, so does his image. In a second, he is gone.

Once again, there is no hard evidence to support Tynna's story. However, at this point, if Drakob's player has failed to notice anything interesting about the period of the early 800s, have him roll the following task:

To notice that the early 800s (the time of the *Arbellatra*'s demise) were during the psionic suppressions:
Difficult, Int, Edu (uncertain)
Referee: On total truth and success, or some truth and exceptional success, pass Drakob's player a note card declaring that the period of the *Arbellatra*'s demise was during the psionic suppressions.

REFUELING

With construction on either option completed, the ship needs only to be refueled before it can make an attempt to escape the Nirton system. In its current jury-rigged configuration, there is no way that the craft can skim the jovian for fuel. The patrol cruiser carries a ship's boat that might be used to scoop fuel if a character is willing to risk his life in the contaminated jovian atmosphere in the antiquated and somewhat damaged smaller craft. The task for this is:

To skim a gas giant for starship fuel:
Routine, Pilot, Navigation, 1 hour (hazardous)

The system's main planet, Nirton, is devoid of potential fuel sources. But there is one place where fuel might be obtained, if they work quickly: the cometary body which first brought the *Sword of Arbellatra* to their attention.

Careful calculations indicate that the comet can be overtaken in 10 days at the ship's 0.1 gee thrust. As with the flight to *Sword of Arbellatra*, the pilot will be required to make four task rolls for a successful trip.

Being composed primarily of highly contaminated water ice over a stone or nickel-iron core, comets are seldom used for wilderness refueling. Thus, although "the book" says that such an operation can be mounted, none of the crew have ever been involved in one. The acquisition of fuel from this unusual source is somewhat more dangerous and time consuming than more conventional refueling methods. It is fortunate for all involved that the comet has completed its closest approach to the star and has pulled far enough away to be fairly stable by the time the characters reach it.

To refuel at the comet:
Difficult, Vacc Suit, Mechanical, Edu, time varies (hazardous)
Referee: Use a time increment of 1 min per kiloliter of fuel to be mined. The combined fuel capacity of both vessels is 3,257 kiloliters, which means the time increment for this task is about 2.5 days. Mishaps indicate anything from a geothermal "hotspot" on the comet's surface erupting in shower of ice and rock to a vacc suit malfunction.

ANOTHER ENCOUNTER

As the refueling is taking place, Tynna once again encounters her spectre, on the comet or in the ship. With a look of intense concentration on his brow, Sir Phaylenn speaks again.

"I do not have much time, the effort of sustaining my presence is draining the last traces of my power."

To the others, Tynna seems to be in a trance. A medical scan reveals that she is in an almost comatose state, though her brain activity is moving at a furious pace. Drakob has never seen anything like it before, and neither have his computer records.

Through a brief conversation with the ghost, Tynna will learn many things. Unfortunately, the information is basic and raises more questions than it answers.

Sir Phaylenn was a member of the Order of the White Star. This order, which was formed in 640 by the direct order of Empress Arbellatra, was open to any knight with psionic powers. He is shocked to learn that Tynna's computer queries have found no information at all about his order because "we have gained some degree of fame due to the valor of our members."

In 824, Phaylenn and the other members of his order, acting on information received from the corvette *Gallachi*, jumped into the Nirton system to attack and destroy a pirate base that had been threatening the Imperial frontier worlds. When they arrived, they found no sign of pirates. When *Gallachi* turned on them and opened fire, it became clear that they had been tricked. Although they were aware that public sentiment was turning increasingly against psionics, they never believed that their loyalty would be questioned.

After a fierce battle, in which both ships were badly damaged, troops from aboard *Gallachi* stormed *Arbellatra* and attempted to take the vessel. When it became clear that the *Arbellatra* was destined to tumble into the atmosphere of the system's gas giant and break up, *Gallachi* recalled her troops and jumped from the system.

Working quickly, the few surviving member of *Arbellatra*'s crew were able to alter the ship's course slightly and hurl her into a long arc that ended in a low orbit about the system's star.

Phaylenn used a psionic power which he calls "Extension" to allow his "life force" to survive for a brief period beyond the death of his corporeal form. Only the fact that he was the most powerful psionicist in the order and his almost absolute lack of activity over the centuries has allowed his life force to stay around as long as it has.

Urging Tynna to "restore the Order and remove the taint which has obviously fallen on it", Phaylenn announces that he has expended the last of his power and fades out of existence for the last time.

ESCAPE

With the refueling operation completed, the ship(s) are ready to attempt their jump out of the Nirton system.

Computer simulations and navigational checks for option A will show that, because of the unusual and untested configuration of the jump grid and the jury-rigged nature of the power distribution system, the chance of making a safe jump drops off rapidly. While a one parsec jump can be attempted with a fair degree of confidence, the odds on making a successful longer jump are next to nil. For option B, only the deteriorated condition of the *Arbellatra* is cause for concern, and the fact that *Rah*'s power plant is smaller than *Arbellatra*'s original.

Of the two worlds within one parsec, Walston and Datrillian, only Walston is a logical destination for the jump. In addition to being an Imperial client state, it houses a Scout base and a better starport. Datrillian, on closer examination, is no place to jump in a crippled starship that may break apart on arrival.

One by one, the system checks are completed and the characters can conduct the risky jump. In a sudden surge of power, the jump grids flash to life and a blue haze surrounds the ship. In a flash, there is nothing left and the Nirton system is once again empty of life.

Over the course of the next few hours, everyone on the ship becomes violently ill.

To be continued next issue. . .

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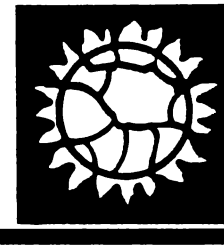


Starmercs: Mercenary Military Starships

—by Jim Cunningham and Gordon Sheridan

Building spacecraft, operating them, and maintaining them over the years are expensive undertakings. Even planetary governments sometimes find financing ships difficult, especially those in system defense which do not provide income from trade operations. Some requirements, such as the elimination of a pirate operation in system, are temporary, so large sums of money must be spent on a short-lived ship requirement.

One solution to this problem that has been developed is the "starmerc" — a mercenary military starship or defense boat. Starmercs fill the void left by thinly-spread Imperial Navy fleets, providing worlds and private corporations with ships for anti-piracy, merchant protection, commerce patrol, and general system defense duties. Since the assassination of emperor Strephon, starmerc activity is at an all-time high.

Starmercs have the potential of interfering somewhat with Imperial desires, and as a result are under strict Imperial regulation. A number of laws control the use and power of starmercs, and a fair number of unwritten "understandings" limit them besides.

All starmerc operations must have a license from the Imperium to exist legally. Such licenses are difficult to obtain, and are generally given only to large corporations or to individuals of noble status (usually retired naval officers of flag rank). Retired Naval officers are trusted as loyal by the government, and large corporations can be penalized in any number of ways if their starmerc operations do not comply with Imperial wishes (by being forced to pay higher taxes, for example). The first year of a starmerc operation is heavily scrutinized by the Navy, and the license can be terminated if this trial period is not passed. In addition, licenses are granted by classification, which limits the type of ship a licensee may operate (see below).

To prohibit potentially damaging or embarrassing situations, all extra-Imperial operations must be approved by a sector admiral, and the sale of any starmerc vessel requires Imperial approval. An unauthorized sale, made to a party or individual inside or outside of Imperial territory, results in instant revocation of the starmerc license and immediate repossession of the unit's assets by the Imperial Navy. Further action may be taken as deemed appropriate by the proper authorities.

The Imperial Rules of War (see the MegaTraveller *Imperial Encyclopedia*) are binding on starmerc ships at all times, including the ruling on nuclear warheads on missiles for space combat. The following restrictions on vessels and their weaponry also apply: black globes are not permitted, the possession of vessels over 5,000 tons is expressly prohibited without special permission from the grand admiral of the fleet (which is usually administered at the request of a sector admiral), no particle accelerator with a rating greater than seven is permitted, and meson guns are prohibited. In addition, all starmerc assets come under direct Imperial command in states of emergency (including but not limited to war). For all practical purposes, starmercs are part of the Imperial Navy under such conditions.

Starmerc vessels are expressly forbidden to take part in tradewar operations, but attempts to enforce this policy have been less than successful. In many instances the corporation undertaking the tradewar is large enough to own and operate its own starmerc unit, and of course these are called in for tradewar operations.

Keeping indigenous starmerc use hidden from the Imperium can be accomplished in several ways. First, the starmerc ship can be hired out to a world or dummy corporation that is controlled by the owning corporation, thus giving the appearance that the ships are being used for other purposes.

The second method is simpler and more direct: authorities are bribed to turn their backs on tradewar operations, and the starmerc involvement associated with them. Starmerc ships involved in tradewar operations can also justify their operation legally by claiming the operation was against "pirate traffic" and by giving their accounts as purely defensive actions. In some cases, the defensive justification may be accurate — the opponent in the tradewar may have undertaken a deliberate offensive against the other side's merchant shipping. This latter method is being used by many starmerc units in the current Shattered Imperium.

In many cases it is difficult to recognize or prove the existence of a tradewar, but too much circumstantial evidence in too many operations will eventually attract Imperial attention. If the starmerc unit in question persists in participating in questionable operations, its license may be revoked. In practice, there are no hard and fast rules for starmerc participation in tradewars, and such events are handled on a case-by-case basis.

Lastly, all starmerc vessels must undergo inspection by the Imperial Navy at pre-arranged times and locations. This prohibits the operator from leaving his assigned area of space for long durations (to perform a quick raid for a world

beyond the border, for example) and to ensure that the vessels are operating within regulations.

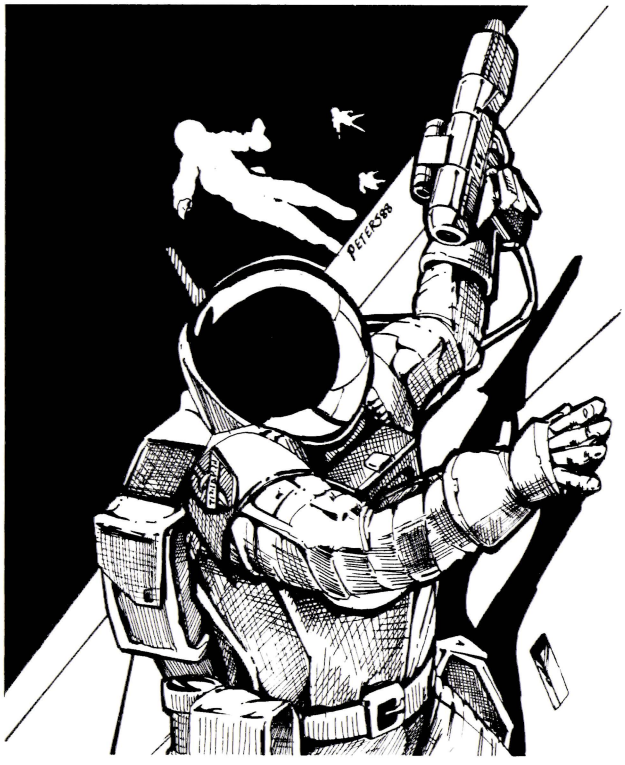
In addition to the above, most starmerc operators abide by the following unwritten agreement: with the bulk of starmerc operations being defensive, most respect a limitation of minimally damaging an enemy ship. That is, once a ship's drives and weapons are disabled, it will no longer be fired upon. Unnecessary starmerc violence is frowned on in the business sphere, and while not strictly illegal by Imperial law in defensive situations, excessive violence is a sure way to get on the bad side of the authorities.

COMPOSITION

Starmerc vessels range from 10-ton fighters to 20,000-ton system defense boats. Most of the vessels are in the 300- to 1,000-ton range. Larger ships are deemed impractical and too expensive, although they have their uses in some roles. Most starmerc operations obtain their vessels from the Imperial Navy as surplus. The ships are refurbished, modified as required, and adjusted with respect to armament as the new owner sees fit. Other starmerc operations prefer to design and build their own ships, which is more expensive but can result in a ship specifically tailored for mission types that a regular ship cannot perform (combinations of towing, deep-space tracking, in-system dry-dock for small craft, and so on).

As mentioned earlier, licenses are issued to starmerc operations by type. This permits further Imperial regulation of space combat capability in private hands. As a general rule, only large trusted starmerc operations obtain licenses for larger heavily-armed vessels.

The dividing line between starmerc and trader is a fine one in some instances. First drafts of Imperial law referred to starmercs being purely military vessels, and some lesser-funded companies found loopholes which permitted them to operate re-engined and heavily-armed traders as starmerc vessels without having to obtain a license.



The Imperium closed these loopholes by reclassifying starmerc vessels by mission intention rather than ship type. Once these new laws were enacted, the companies using non-military vessels were forced out of the business — they were denied or could not afford licenses. Those that could upgraded their vessels to military types to keep up with the capabilities of their competitors.

LICENSE CLASSIFICATIONS

A. Non-starship, less than 100 tons. Includes fighters, gunboats, and small system defense boats.

B. Non-starship, less than 1,000 tons. Includes most system defense boat types.

C. Non-starship, less than 5,000 tons. Includes larger system defense boats and monitors.

D. Starship, less than 1,000 tons. This rating includes most starmerc starships. Small starships are employed in duties which require mobility, such as intersystem merchant protection, intersystem anti-piracy operations, and operations in systems too isolated to permit access by limited-range system defense boat jump shuttles.

E. Starship, less than 5,000 tons. Ships in this classification are rare. Ships of the previous classification are usually large enough to deal with most threats, and at considerably lower cost. For some missions, however, such as system defense from a hostile state, or anti-piracy strike missions, larger vessels are required.

F. Other. This designation is reserved for special ships that do not fit any of the above categories. One current example is a surplus 20,000-ton battle rider, now being used as a system defense boat, starmerc corporate headquarters and repair facility for the company's smaller ships.

SHIP TYPES

Most starmerc ships are retired Imperial Naval vessels. Common classes include the *Firey* and *Gazelle* close escorts, the *Lucifer* destroyer escort, the type T patrol cruiser, the *Chrysanthemum* and *Fer-de-Lance* destroyers, most system defense boat types, and some small craft. Nearly any ship of 50 years or older listed in any **Traveller** source is an excellent candidate for starmerc service. Referees may also wish to design their own ships.•

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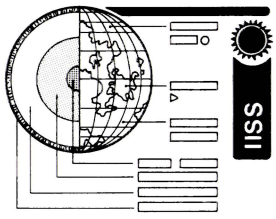


The Ptolemy System

A TRAVELLER'S OVERVIEW
—by John A. Theisen

Ptolemy is the main inhabited world in the Hipparchus star system, located in Jardin Subsector of Solomani Rim Sector. The information contained in this system survey is based on the most recent data available, as obtained from the Solomani Confederation Navy Planetary Survey Service.

GENERAL SYSTEM DATA AND HISTORY

Ptolemy/Jardin/Solomani Rim (0639 B543686-C) is the first planet orbiting the M1 V main sequence star Hipparchus, the primary in a binary system. A total of five planets, 18 satellites, two debris rings, and one planetoid belt orbit Hipparchus and its M0 sub-dwarf companion star, Soter. Though located in the habitable zone, Ptolemy is a hot and generally uncomfortable world.

The Hipparchus system was first colonized in -2392 by Solomani, shortly after the first Solomani/Vilani contact. This system's remoteness resulted in undisturbed security for its colonists through the Nth Interstellar War. Ptolemy remained equally unaffected by the Rule of Man, the Long Night, and the creation of the Solomani Autonomous Region (of which it was a part) in 704.

Ptolemy saw limited use as a Confederation rear-area hospital and rest-and-recuperation facility during the Solomani Rim War; it was never attacked by Imperial forces, duly recognized by both sides as an unarmed haven for just such purposes.

Ptolemy has at least one puzzling secret. Archaeologists found that the planet had been previously inhabited by another sophont race. Presently, native life consists of a few hundred species of mammals, birds, insects, fish, and several thousand species of reptiles. However, ruins of at least two cities dating back about 50,000 years have been found in equatorial latitudes. One hypothesis states that the sites are the work of an unknown race that existed (or still exists) somewhere beyond Aldebaran Sector.

All Imperial citizens visiting Ptolemy or its neighbor should exercise caution; this system is a member in good standing of the Solomani Confederation. Visitors are beyond Imperial jurisprudence.

PTOLEMY'S SATELLITES

Sine (Y310337-B) is a large satellite, wholly owned and controlled by Arktanjent Elecop, a Ptolemy-based corporation specializing in designing and manufacturing high-tech electronics, including communications and medical equipment. Though Arktanjent is a company in name, its organizational structure is a nepotistic oligarchy. The firm's Board of Directors literally inherit their positions from their predecessors. The "employees" are considered citizens of Ptolemy and not of Sine, with no input into the operation of the company or life on the satellite. However, in exchange for Arktanjent's strict control over daily routine, workers receive some of the highest salaries in this part of the subsector. Ongoing research and development are directly responsible for the system's achievements in communications and medicine. Sine currently supports 2,500 inhabitants.

Shur (Y100165-B) is the site of Hospital Aesculapius, a small facility for studying highly infectious diseases. Shur is administered by the Ptolemy Administration for Physical Health and Infectious Disease Control.

Goshen (YS00000-0) is of little interest except as a future source of recoverable minerals.

OTHER WORLDS

The gas giants of Ra, Osiris, Wallis Budge, and Thoth provide ready sources of hydrogen fuel for interplanetary and interstellar spacecraft. The gases in Thoth's atmosphere burns much cleaner than average, with small pockets of scooped "air" approaching refined-fuel quality.

Qeb, Ra's outermost satellite, is actually larger than Ptolemy, and possesses a thin, untainted atmosphere; only the absence of significant liquid water makes it inhospitable. Anubis is remarkable in having a substantial hydrographic percentage for a satellite (mostly as water ice). It has excellent potential for future colonization. The class G or H spaceports in certain locations reflect areas where limited mining is taking place. Bast, Osiris' inner satellite, has a trace atmosphere similar to Sine's, as well as a small emergency landing strip for in-system craft. Very small colonies have been established on Shu II (a planetoid in the Stones of Shu belt), Qeb, and Crowley, Thoth's outer satellite. The remaining satellites and rings are of little interest.

PHYSICAL DATA

Ptolemy is a molten-core world of modest size and chaotic climate, with a high mean base temperature (41°C), a long (43-hour) day, a short (48-day) year, and a severe (40°) axial tilt. The Ptolemaics have a proverb: "Praying to the gods will change the world; the skies change of their own accord." The axial tilt results in a dramatic seasonal change between Warming and Cooling, with each season commemorated by a corresponding Change Day. An extra day is added to the local calendar every third year (except in years divisible by 30, when no extra day is added). The weather has more spontaneity and intensity than variety.

Hurricanes are rare because the oceans do not often permit a long off-shore storm track, but when they do occur they are devastating though short-lived. Snow and hail are uncommon, except during the Cooling in the higher latitudes. "Tropical" downpours are common near the coasts. The half-standard atmospheric pressure helps foster low-altitude storm clouds, and tornadoes tend to be squatty and mushroom-shaped instead of tall and funnel-shaped; their effects, though, are much the same.

Finally, the warm oceans have a much higher salinity level than usual. Salt corrosion occurs very rapidly, and it is much harder to sink; an accidental drowning in the oceans of Ptolemy is nearly impossible.

Large expanses of continent are covered in short ground-cover scrub or open desert, while areas along the coastlines are often covered in dense, rapidly-growing jungles. Because 90 percent of Ptolemy's surface is on a single tectonic plate, mountains are fairly rare and quite small. Seismic activity is nonexistent and the only active volcano, called the "Tower of Memphis", is located on an uninhabited

island in Ptolemy's largest ocean. There is no significant tidal stress. Only Sine has any tidal influence; its effect is minimal.

Agriculture was once limited to narrow strips of land several kilometers inland. However, with improvements in localized climate control and hydrographic terraforming (which has increased the world's hydrographic percentage by two points), the task of growing crops in inclement weather has become less difficult. Agri-research has developed very fast-growing crops, capable of maturing in fewer than 20 days after planting—helpful with a 24-day growing season!

Ptolemy's resources are varied, but not extensive. Manufactured goods are produced, but most only in sufficient quantity for local consumption. Efforts are underway to expand the world's exports, but progress is slow.

Pelusium is the capital of Ptolemy, and the site of a class C starport, but most visitors (and all non-Confederation citizens) enter through the Jewel of Hipparchus, an elegantly-furnished orbital city with class B facilities. Ptolemy's eight million inhabitants are decentralized, occupying hundreds of cities and towns, with the largest located in the polar areas.

CULTURAL PROFILE

Every literate citizen of Ptolemy possesses a book, tape, or disk of *The Tome of Wisdom*. This volume combines rules on social etiquette, methods for conducting business and trade, philosophical concepts, and perspectives for everyday life, with strong emphasis on "correct thought"—a pattern of preferred conduct for most public and private occasions. Citizens spend time studying or rereading passages of the book each day; most follow the spirit of "correct thought" in every social and cultural transaction.

The Tome of Wisdom, in various editions, has been used on Ptolemy for more than three millenia. In general terms, the book advocates calm, rational thought, peaceful interaction with others, and complete honesty toward outsiders.

Though this has produced an unaggressive and peaceable society, it has also led to conservative behavior and a stagnant attitude toward natural social evolution. Technology has been permitted to improve, but the people cannot change with the times. Some socioanalysts have described their cultural behavior as "dangerously backward" and "hidebound", trapped in blind custom and guided only by an obsolete document.

In all fairness, provisions have been made for limited, controlled change. Judges are permitted (according to the book) to edit *The Tome of Wisdom* every fortieth year. Nevertheless, no changes have been made since 1008. At that time, a brief footnote was added regarding humaniti's willingness and capability for waging war; in a sense, this was a mild criticism of the Solomani Rim War, which concluded in 1002. It is important to remember that war is unthinkable to the average Ptolemaic. Wars may happen...but they happen somewhere else. The local inhabitants see an unaggressive approach as the only "correct" one.

There is one area in which Ptolemaics are not passive: personal religion. Minor theological differences often produce discord, especially between rival government factions. Though nothing serious ever comes of the disagreements, the net result is to delay any changes that might be accepted by one group or another. *The Tome of Wisdom* does not permit war; neither does it contain methods for negotiation between obstinate politicians with conflicting faiths.

TECHNOLOGICAL PROFILE

Ptolemy's technology is within average. It is an interesting contradiction to see so much scientific research taking place on a world so sociologically arrested.

Arktanjent Elecop (see Ptolemy's satellites) is almost solely responsible for tech level E progress in communications and medicine. Environmental science (and perhaps computers/robotics as well) are due to ongoing efforts in climate control and hydrographic terraforming.

The most interesting variation is in space transport, where Ptolemaics are as advanced as many less remote, more heavily populated systems. In fact, their interest in spaceflight and related technology has surpassed their interest in maintaining full facility spaceports. Curiously, Ptolemaics believe "if one has a good ship to fly, one can go anywhere and does not necessarily need a good place to land."

GOVERNMENT

Ptolemy's government is relatively small, but bureaucratically complex. The leading branch of authority is a four-lobed legislative branch. Each body has its own method for providing representation: the Legislature of Populace (based on number of citizens per district), the Legislature of Domain (based on surface land area per district), the Legislature of Equality (which gives every religion equal representation per district), and the Legislature of Wealth (based on the personal and corporate financial resources in each district). Citizens are elected to serve in a Legislature, and remain in service until they step down or are recalled (a citizen-sponsored action requiring the affirmative vote of 10 percent of the number which elected that official originally). Usually, about 15 percent of any Legislature's membership is in the process of recall; this average varies from Legislature to Legislature.

The Judicial branch, or The Judges, meets in several different councils. One maintains and interprets criminal law. Others handle civil, foreign (any law involving non-Ptolemaics), and personal freedom laws. The last is also responsible for changes in *The Tome of Wisdom*, an infrequent duty.

The Executive branch has literally dozens of "Administrations". Each Administration has a specific task to perform, such as Administration for Surface and Water Transport Safety, or Administration for Industrial Expansion. The biggest problem with this method of government is frequent duplication of effort with insufficient checks and balances.

Administrations can be created or disbanded by a law passing any three of the four Legislatures. One of the largest and most active Administrations is the Administration for Evaluating Administrative Efficiency in Government. However, there has been serious debate in the Legislature of Wealth over disbanding this Administration because of its own lack of efficiency.

PLANETARY LAWS AND ENFORCEMENT

The Judges of Ptolemy have an interesting and long-standing attitude regarding laws and enforcement: every individual is capable of defense against crime, because a criminal act involves two people in conflict. In contrast, when civil or trade laws, or customs are violated, these are violations of *The Tome of Wisdom* involving man's efforts toward "correct thought". For this reason, Ptolemy's civil laws and regulations on personal freedom are far more restrictive than its criminal laws. Likewise, no one is above the law, because no one is above the "book".

On the other hand, trade regulations are minimal, because Ptolemaics are completely honest and forthright in their business dealings. They do not believe in selling shoddy merchandise without warning the buyer or reducing their price appropriately; and they don't believe anyone would ever try to cheat them deliberately. (Occasionally, someone gets a nasty surprise.)

There are two rules of thumb for visitors to follow when trying to avoid legal entanglements: 1) "When on Vland, act like a Vilani." Observe local customs as much as possible, and try to remain inconspicuous. 2) "The Word is the Deed." The mere act of talking about committing a "crime" is as bad as committing it. The action of speech indicates the person is thinking "incorrect thoughts". (Fortunately, Ptolemaics don't have the technology for mind control.)

RELIGION

Philosophy and worship are important components of everyday life for the vast majority of Ptolemaics. This world is the home of various religions, all loosely based on polytheism, but disagreeing on which particular god(ess) is the most powerful or important. The degree of disparity is often exaggerated by adherents. Each religion is centered in a specific city, and every major (primary) city maintains an elaborate temple for its particular deity, with no two cities holding special allegiance to the same one.

Spiritual aims, frequency of devotion, organization structure, and missionary fervor all vary from faith to faith, making it impractical to describe the characteristics of each city-religion. However, no particular faith has more than several hundred thousand followers, and all religious ceremonies are of a formal nature.

Ptolemaics do not take kindly to anyone who commits sacrilege openly. Depending upon the particular faith, acts of sacrilege may range from failing to wear decorative headgear while indoors to staring at a sacred area of ground for an excessive period of time (several seconds). It can be very difficult for outsiders to master local religious customs, and the Ptolemaics are unusually intolerant on this point, in contrast with their otherwise friendly and non-combative nature. Incidentally, it is considered less of an offense to believe in the "wrong" god from the pantheon than to believe in no god, and be branded as "faithless".

There is another interesting aspect to Ptolemaic religion. Every 77 Imperial standard years, representatives of every faith meet in a Grand Blessing, a conference, for a period of devout worship. At this time, a planet, satellite, ring, or planetoid belt is "blessed", and becomes sanctified until the next Grand Blessing, when another location is chosen. The blessed planet or satellite may not be visited by man or machine, orbited, or observed through visual flybys or optical equipment. If there are already colonists present, they are evacuated—though any structures may be mothballed for post-blessing use. The "blessed" planet becomes an interdicted site; any mention of approaching it is taboo for the faithful of any religion (Ptolemy itself is exempt from selection). The Grand Blessing of 1073 chose Anubis for "blessing"; it is off limits until the year 1150.

PIRATES - CONSPIRACY OR COVERUP?

Piracy has long been a problem in the Jardin subsector. The Solomani Confederation suspects the government of Ptolemy of harboring pirates, but they lack proof. In turn, the Administration for Interstellar Piracy has repeatedly denied any Ptolemaic involvement. According to officials, the government of Ptolemy does not know the whereabouts or intentions of any pirate ships or gangs in the sector.

STAR SYSTEM DATA

Name/Location: Ptolemy/Jardin/Solomani Rim 0639

Orbit	Name	UWP	Remarks
Primary	Hipparchus	M1 V	Magnitude 8.64
0*	Ptolemy	B543686-C	
7	Goshen	YS00000-O	
52	Sine	Y310337-B	
62	Shur	Y100165-B	
1	Stones of Shu	G000268-B	planetoid belt
2	Ra	Large Gas Giant	
1	Band of Isis	YR00000-0	ring
5	Nephthys	Y2A0000-0	
6	Anjur	H210000-0	
8	Apep	H200000-0	
10	Apshai	Y200000-0	
12	Anubis	Y333000-0	
30	Phoenix	H200000-0	
58	Ptah	Y220000-0	
59	Qeb	H650164-B	
3	Osiris	Large Gas Giant	
36	Bast	H410000-0	
62	Seker	Y100000-0	
4	empty orbit		
5		empty orbit	
6	empty orbit		
7	empty orbit		
8	Soter	companion star	
Companion	Soter	M0 sub-dwarf	
0	Wallis Budge	Small Gas Giant	
3	Band of Bes	YR00000-0	ring
5	Carter	Y200000-0	
7	Set	Y400000-0	
8	Tefnut	YS00000-0	
0.8	Thoth	Small Gas Giant	
5	Horus	YS00000-0	
22	Crowley	Y200114-B	

***GRAND SURVEY* WORLD PROFILE**

World Name: Ptolemy
Location: Solomani Rim 0639
UPP: B543686C

Physical Data:

Diameter: 8023 km
Density: 1.02 standard
Mass: 0.246 standard
Surface Gravity: 0.63 g
Rotation Period: 43 hrs, 22 min, 7 sec
Orbital Period: 48.30 standard days
Seasons: Warming, Cooling (24 days each)
Axial Tilt: 40° 24' 45.7"
Orbital Eccentricity: 0.00
Satellites: Goshen (YS00000-0)
Sine (Y310337-B)
Shur (Y100165-B)
Surface Atm Pressure: 0.50 standard atm
Atm Composition: Standard nitrogen mix with high oxygen taint
Atm Terraforming: No
Hyd Percentage: 30%
Hyd Composition: Water
Hyd Terraforming: Yes

Temperature:

Base Surface Temp: 41.4°C
Axial tilt Modifiers: +24.2°C, -40.4°C
Rotation Modifiers: +13.0°C, -65.0°C
Latitude Modifiers: 5.5°C per hex row
Orbital Eccentricity: —
Other Modifiers: None
Weather Terraforming: Yes
Grnhouse Terraforming: No
Albedo Terraforming: No

Mapping Data:

Nbr Tectonic Plates: 2 (covering 90%, 10%)
Native Life: Yes
Terrain Terraforming: No
Major Continents: World
Minor Continents: World
Major Oceans: 1
Minor Oceans: 5 (13 small seas, 5 scattered lakes)

Seismic Data:

Stress Factor: 0
Notable Volcanoes: 1 active

Resources:

Natural Resources: Agricultural
Processed Resources: Agricultural, Agroproducts
Manufactured Products: Weapons, Heavy Equip, Electronics, Gravitics

Population & Ports:

World Population: 8,776,000
Primary Cities: Heliopolis; 99,000; cls D
Zoan; 98,200; class D
Parva; 97,100; class F
Buto 93,600; class F
Pelusium; 93,000; class C
Busiris; 92,500; class D
Alexandria; 92,200; class D
Sile; 92,000; class D
Migdol; 91,800; class C
Bubastis; 91,500; class C
78 other cities, circa 50,000; class G
Secondary Cities: 504 cities, circa 5,000
Tertiary Cities: 1526 cities, circa 500
Orbital City: Jewel of Hipparchus; 56,000; class B

***GRAND CENSUS* CULTURAL PROFILE:**

World Name: Ptolemy
Location: Solomani Rim 0639
UPP: B543686-C

Cultural Profile:

Progressiveness-Att: Conservative
Progressiveness-Act: Stagnant
Aggressiveness-Att: Unaggressive
Aggressiveness-Act: Peaceable
Global Extent: Discordant
Interstellar Extent: Friendly

Technology Profile:

High Common: C
Low Common: B
Energy: B
Computers/Robotics: C
Communications: E
Medical: E
Environment: C
Land Transport: B
Water Transport: B
Air Transport: B
Space Transport: E
Personal Weapons: B
Heavy Weapons: B
Novelty: E

Government Division of Authority:

Represent Authority: Legislative (Several Councils)
Other Authorities: Executive (Several Councils), Judicial (Several Councils)

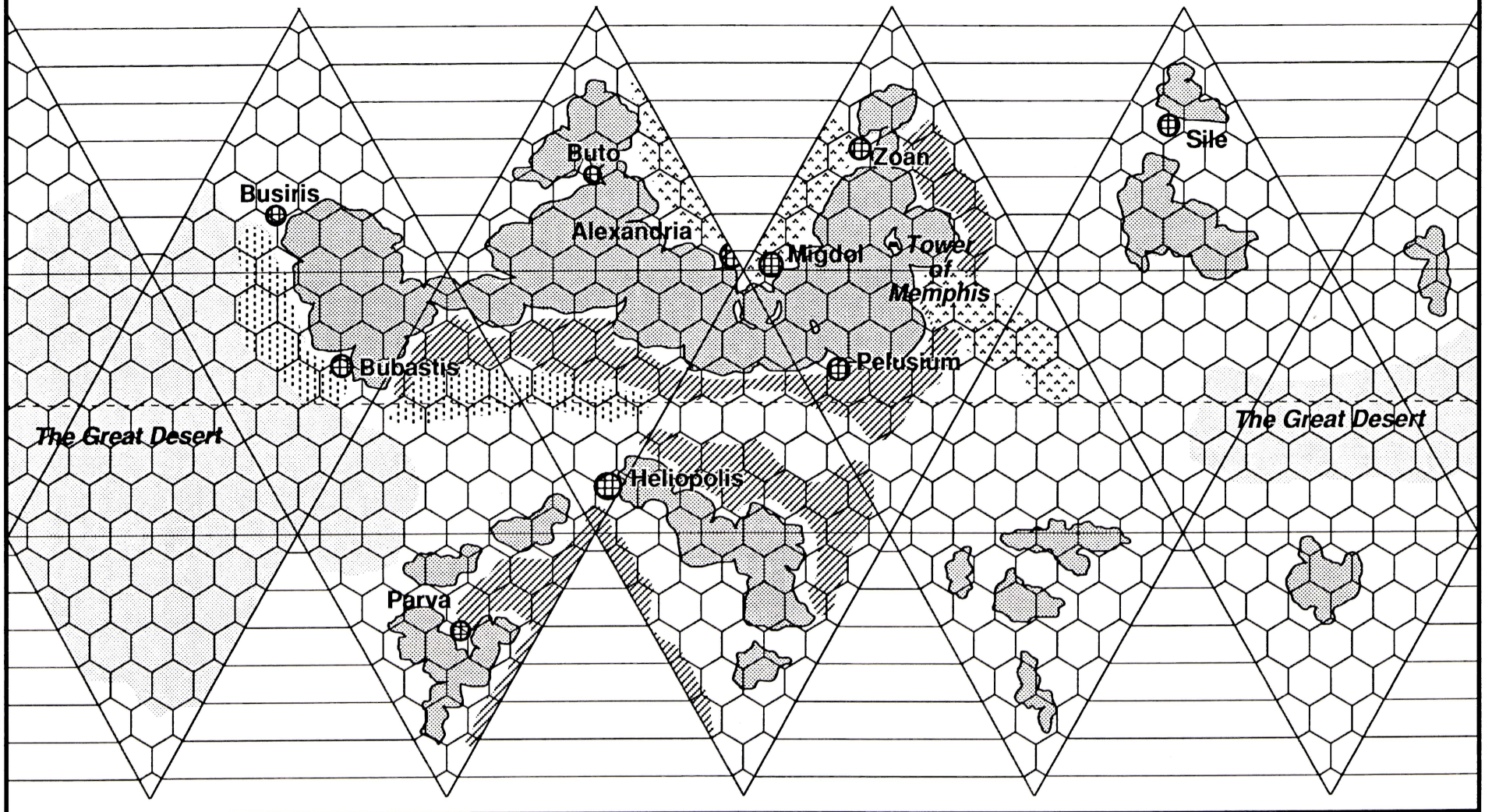
Law Level:

Overall: 6
Weapons: 6
Trade: 2
Criminal Law: 6
Civil Law: 8
Personal Freedom: 10
Uniformity: Undivided

WORLD MAP GRID

This geodesic map grid divides the spherical surface of any globe into twenty triangles, each of which is further divided into hexagons. Note terrain identities and other planetographic features of the world in these hexagons. Total number of map hexes per triangle: 25. Total number of map hexes: 500.

1. Date of Preparation	2. World Name *(and UWP)*	3. Hexagon Scale in Kilometers (circumference divided by 35)	4. Subsector and Sector Location of World
1117	Ptolemy B543686C	720 km	Jardin/Solomani Rim 0639



Map Terrain Key

- Settled
- Ocean
- Tundra
- Major Metropolis circa 100 thousand
- Rugged
- Volcano
- Terraformed Desert
- Desert
- Jungle

IS Form 21

World Map Grid (Large)

Four Kings

A TRAVELLER'S OVERVIEW
—by John A. Theisen

This classified information is intended for referees only!

HISTORY AND INTRODUCTION

Jardin Subsector has been plagued by frequent piracy raids since the mid-1070s. Many of these raids involved boarding civilian or commercial ships and confiscating the vessels' cargo. On some occasions, civilian hostages were taken and casualties were heavy, whether any resistance was offered or not. In other incidents, no one was injured provided there was no interference. It is also believed that pirates may have been responsible for several starship disappearances in the last two decades.

While pirate activity has consistently centered in an area near the Ptolemy system (0639), Ptolemy itself has been relatively unscathed by these attacks. As a result, representatives of the Solomani Confederation have asked many pointed questions of Ptolemy's government. For its part, Ptolemy has consistently and enthusiastically denied any involvement. Given their code of behavior under the *Tome of Wisdom*, it seems unlikely that they could ever have aided the pirates in any substantial way.

Unfortunately, Ptolemy's assistance is needed to stop the pirates. The local Solomani Confederation naval detachment is a relatively small force and only has three subsector bases from which to operate: Jardin 0233, Barsoom 0239, and Dolor 0437. The Solomani naval base at Dolor is ostensibly assigned to patrol Ptolemy 0639, as well as the neighboring star systems of Chinon 0536, Nonsuch 0637, Zhongguo 0438, Ormadz 0440, and Arisia 0640. With too few ships spread over too much territory, coordinated system-wide anti-piracy sweeps seem unlikely.

The pirates have been very cunning in their methods of attack, never striking the same location twice in succession. Raids have ceased entirely for months at a time, only to begin once more with hijackings in three successive months. Very little has been determined in the way of a meaningful pattern, and no effective way has been found to stop the raids except by running vessels in convoy—an impractical alternative, given the resources at hand. In the meantime, the Confederation continues to blame Ptolemy's government, quietly (at least for its failure to cooperate actively).

Faced with this dead end, frustrated Confederation naval officials have sounded many theories, none of which has gained widespread support.

THE FOUR KINGS

A pirate band, actually a coalition of four pirate gangs with a total of 50 members, has been operating since 1075, when they learned of a suitable base, the satellite of Anubis (Hipparchus II.5). After Ptolemaic religious leaders declared the satellite off limits to all observation and visitation, and were prepared to enforce their decision, the pirates realized that here was a base with enormous potential. The government would not be directly assisting the pirates, but their own (in)action would hamper any search, ensuring the band some degree of privacy.

The "Four Kings" (the four pirate leaders) style themselves as sovereign rulers in their own right, and view their vocation as an honorable and worthy alternative to more mundane work (such as military service, politics, and so forth). Each of the Four Kings has his own particular style and preferred targets, but they often work together with surprising skill. It is said one likes to seize precious metals, but cares nothing about taking hostages. Another is thought to kill any passengers so as not to leave witnesses. In any event, every member of the band swears allegiance to each of the Four Kings; loyalty is highly prized, and punishment for any lapse is thought to be most unpleasant.

It is not "all work and no play", however; members of the band occasionally take a far trader or scout and visit a neighboring world on "shore leave", while keeping their occupations secret. Such visits permit time for various forms of recreation as well as opportunities to "recruit" new pirates. Some pirates from the Four Kings' earliest years are now living in serene retirement elsewhere in the subsector.

THE PIRATE FLEET

The Four Kings currently maintain a fleet of ten starships at Anubis, in various states of disrepair. Some vessels have been christened by the bandits themselves, while others are more commonly referred to as "rusting piles of scrap", or more colorful terms of endearment. A "preparedness" rating is listed after each vessel, giving the approximate condition of each vessel when compared with a new vessel in shipyard-launching condition. Several ships have been "gutted" for parts to refit a few of the more operational ships. (If in doubt about a particular shipboard system, referees may roll the preparedness number or less on 2D to determine if the specific system in question is operational on the ship.) All ships are TL 14. •

King of Swords	Type P Corsair	12	Flagship
	Type P Corsair	3	(gutted)
King of Rods	Type P Corsair	10	
	Type P Corsair	5	(gutted)
	Type J Seeker	2	(gutted)
	Type Y Yacht	3	(gutted)
	Type L Lab Ship	3	(gutted)
King of Clubs	Type S Scout/Courier	9	
	Type S Scout/Courier	5	(spare parts)
King of Foils	Type A2 Far Trader	11	

BLACKJACK SUBSECTOR

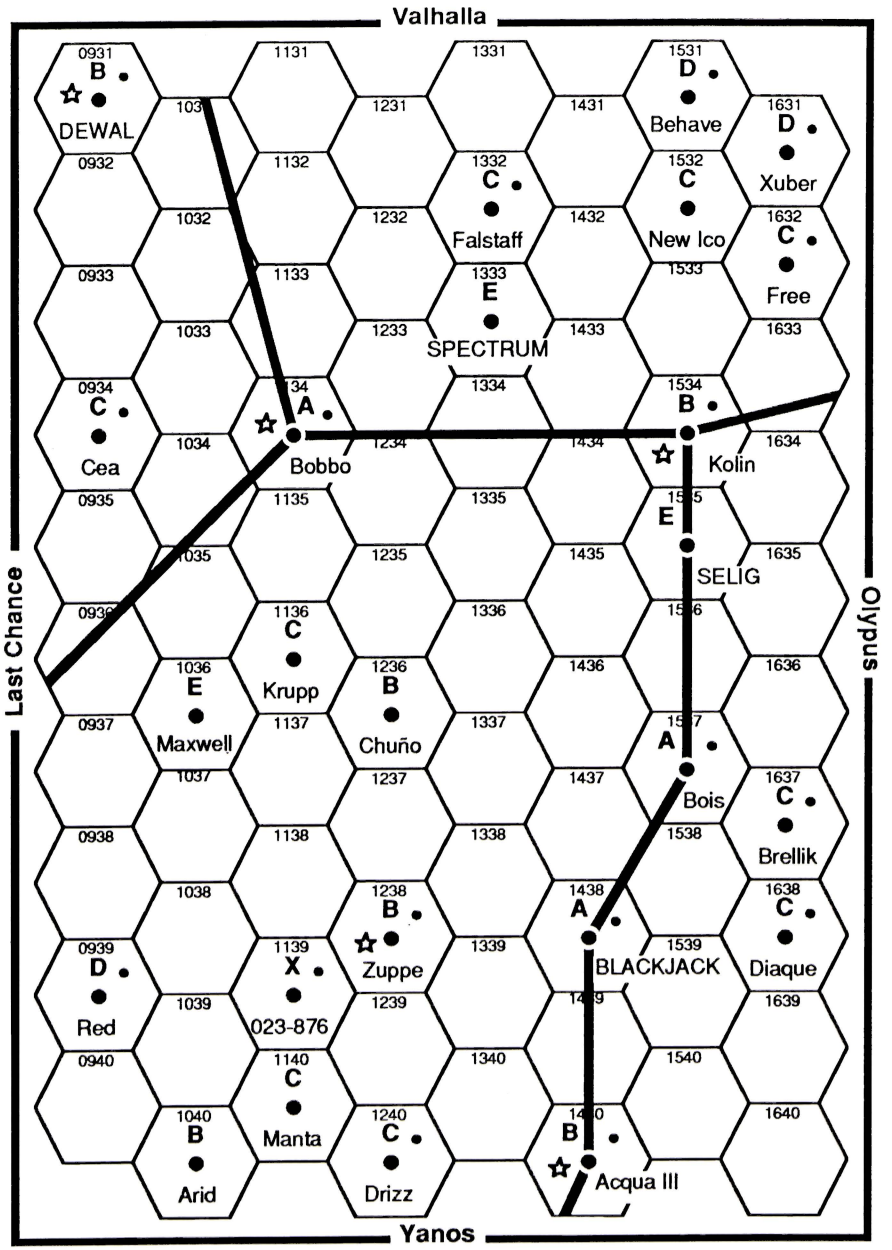
The Blackjack subsector (subsector N of Magyar) was extensively colonized by the Solomani over two thousand years ago. Today, the subsector remains something of a backwater — two of the most heavily populated worlds only have class E starports.

Scientists have transplanted chirpers from Bobbo to Chuño. The new chirper colony is thriving in the low gravity and favorable atmosphere of Chuño.

Acqua III is the site of a Solomani military testing base noted for its undersea craft designs. Rumors persisit that the military has been testing an armed, highly advanced deep-sea craft in the oceans of Acqua III.

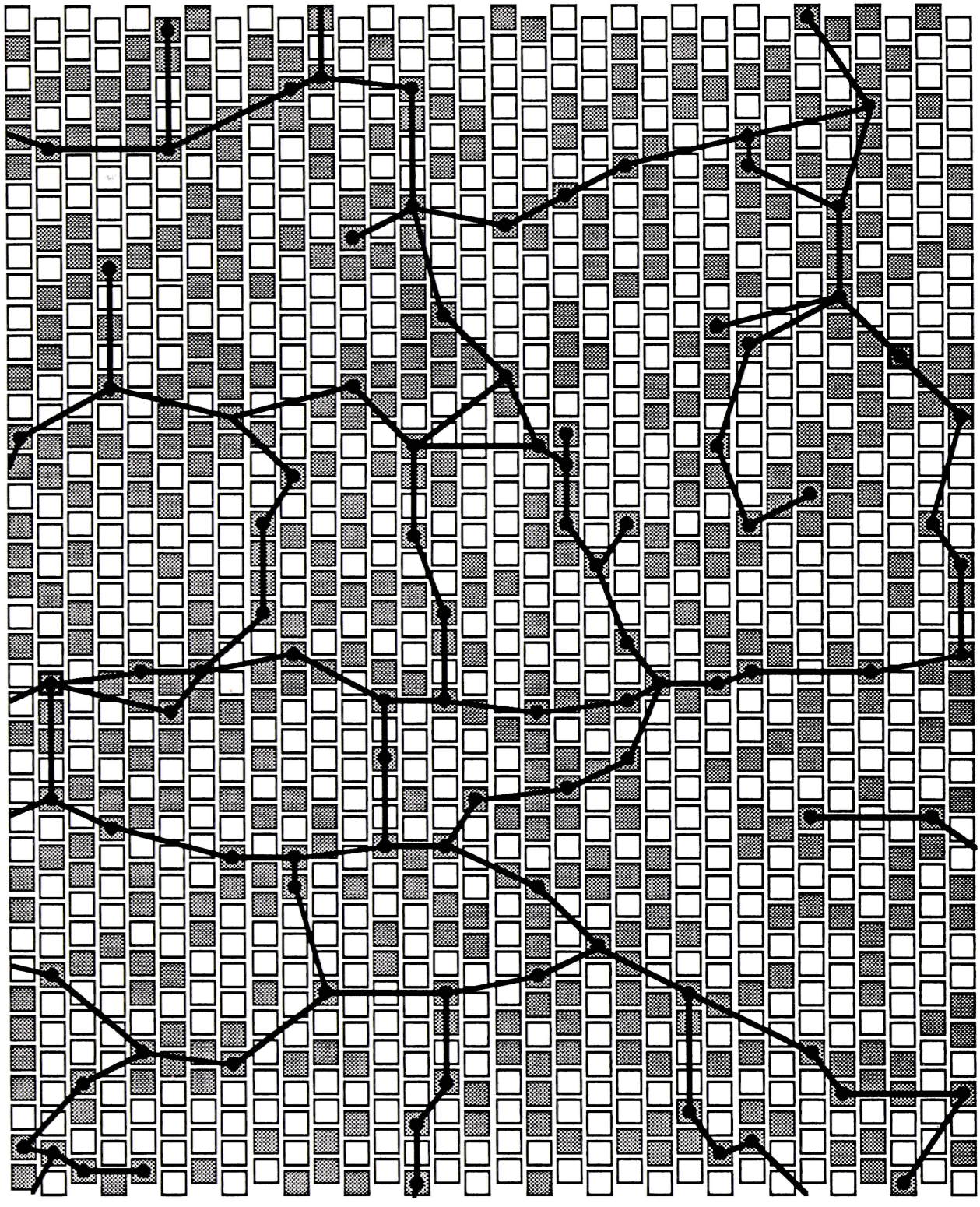
Name	*Location*	*UPP*	*Bases*	*Classifications*	*Data*	*Align*	*Zone*
Dewal	0931	BA98978-E	M	Hi In	712	So	
Cea	0934	C864768-8		Ag Ri O:1134	904	So	
Red	0939	D20159A-A		Ic Ni Va	314	So	
Maxwell	1036	E99A115-A		Lo Ni Wa	420	So	
Arid	1040	B349330-E		Lo Ni	920	So	
Bobbo	1134	A997526-D	M	C0 Ag Ni Xb	602	So	
Krupp	1136	C69A767-B		Wa O:1134	300	So	
023-876	1139	X536400-6		Ni	915	So	
Manta	1140	C653434-9		Ni Po	900	So	
Chuño	1236	B366245-E		C6 Lo Ni	810	So	
Zuppe	1238	B6A468A-C	M	Fl Ni	211	So	
Drizz	1240	C69A546-C		Ni Wa	124	So	
Falstaff	1332	C89A798-B		Wa	405	So	
Spectrum	1333	E258999-B		Hi	500	So	
Blackjack	1438	A5119BD-E		Hi Ic In Na Cp Xb	712	So	
Acqua III	1440	B66A211-E	M	Lo Ni Wa Xb	303	So	
Behave	1531	D344443-8		Ni	601	So	
New Ico	1532	C431577-C		Ni Po	410	So	
Kolin	1534	B244552-D	M	Ag Ni Xb	202	So	
Selig	1535	E79A985-B		Hi In Wa	420	So	
Bois	1537	A201100-E		Ic Lo Ni Va Xb	603	So	
Xuber	1631	D563433-8		Ni	512	So	
Free	1632	C201675-B		Ic Na Ni Va	722	So	
Brellik	1637	C67A110-D		Lo Ni Wa	104	So	
Diaque	1638	C599878-A			803	So	

The Blackjack subsector contains 25 worlds with a total population of 23.971 billion. The highest tech level is E at Dewal, Arid, Chuño, Blackjack, Acqua III, and Bois. All worlds are members of the Solomani Confederation. The data column lists the population multiple, number of planetoid belts, and number of gas giants. Key: Cp=Subsector capital. Xb=Xboat station. O:=Owner.



Blackjack Subsector

Subsector N of Magyar



Xboat Routes of Magyar Sector

Magyar Sector

LIBRARY DATA OF THE SECTOR

—by Nancy Parker and Robert Parker

Clan	Eery	Clown	Anise
Nemo	New Town	Voyager	Kline
Iouo	Valhalla	Swan	New Mars
Last Chance	Black Jack	Olypus	Cluster

Magyar: Subsector Key

Planck/Nemo (0216 B101353-E): Settled originally by scientists seeking a low-gravity world to set up their particle physics experiments, Planck boasts one of the highest average IQs in the Solomani Sphere. It has also become the home of a unique genetic twist: about 85% of the inhabitants possess an eidetic memory. Written information is virtually unused here except to communicate with others off-planet. All data are passed orally and remembered perfectly there after. Of course, it is faster to enter numeric data by keying than by speaking, so computers have kept internal literacy up.

Planck is so small that it keeps all its water in an icy underground aquifer; all surface fluids and volatiles are long gone. A sturdy, granite world, Plank is the largest of a swarm of pieces that failed to coalesce because of the pull of gas giants on both sides.

Iouo/Iouo (0624 A79A968-E): Iouo was formerly the capital of its subsector. An escalating war of economics and ideologies between it and Havaiikii (0523 B69A668-E) seemed likely to ruin both worlds. In 1069, sector authorities stepped in, moving the subsector government four parsecs away to Gobi, and placing both worlds under military rule. A trade commission was appointed to mediate the economic disputes, but they found that the root of the war seemed instead to be in conflicting political philosophies.

The subsector government workers are not terribly pleased with their new location on a near-desert planet, after the gorgeous waterworld they had known. But the younger employees are being recruited from Gobi itself, and many say the older workers are just "too soft."

Eery/Eery (1208 A7BA543-E): Eery's thick atmosphere is a chemical soup, yellow-green and murky, very unhealthy but quite profitable. Many useful chemicals can be made simply by exposing certain of their ingredients to the outside atmosphere.

Even masers have trouble getting through the constant fog, and satellites are worthless for most purposes because not only can they not collect data from the surface, but if they collect data from orbit, they can't relay it to the surface easily. All surface-to-surface communications are fiber optic.

Eeryans spend much of their lives indoors. Eery is famous for all manner of indoor sports and entertainments as well as gourmet food, and supports a thriving tourist trade despite its low population.

Clown/Clown (1807 B401975-E): Clown has two widely separated colonies that rarely deal with each other. When originally colonized, two colonies were established: one in the north polar ice cap region and one in the south polar region. No other location had any water, so population spread was not encouraged. The two simply dug in and grew right where they were. Today, both colonies are still totally self-sufficient and self-governing. The subsector offices are located in Popov, on the north polar cap.

Diana/Olympus (2133 X531474-4): No institution of marriage exists on Diana. Women choose their mates only with an eye to healthy offspring, and see them only to breed. The children are raised by their mothers in large "clan" cities (a clan is loosely related by these maternal lines) and the men live in the fields, forests, and villages outside the cities. At puberty, a male child joins the men.

Most agriculture is a male province, while most industry not directly related to the products of the land is the female domain. Each group trades for the products of the other. Each also has its own culture, art, architecture, literature, and music, very different from the other's.

Residents of Diana undoubtedly came from Terra, but their legends deny it, and they have few dealings with other humans of the Solomani Sphere.

Pacific/Cluster (2933 B56878B-B): Pacific is one of the very earthlike planets to which sentient Dolphins were transplanted as partners in colonization by the Terrans. The native life of Pacific was similar to Terra's; so few non-sentient lifeforms were imported. The world's climate supported humans and Dolphins with no modifications. However, large local predators have presented problems for both species. Much of the effort of the colonists has gone into taming land and sea in the inhabited areas. Other parts of the world have been left wild.

It is not unusual to find Dolphins serving in the subsector offices. When on land, the Dolphins use imported waldo-equipped suits.

Pacific is one of the few planets where Dolphins can be found so often on land, and where they hold key positions in government and commercial institutions.

Skyhaven/Kline (3118 B588501-D): The inhabitants of Skyhaven have no government and want none; indeed they can see no use for a government under any circumstance. No decision is ever taken collectively: each chooses for himself, independent of whether he consults with others or not. There is no army, no police force, no foreign ministry; off-worlders deal directly with the people they wish to see and need answer to no officials.

Many Skyhaveners are quite vocal about their preference of the Imperium over the Solomani Confederation. Solomani, the locals say, tend have *some representative* speak for the whole world. But the Imperium has never interfered with the individualistic approach prefered by the Skyhaveners.

There is, however, a strong taboo on violence, and the penalty is often enforced by the victim or his friends. Off-worlders are strongly advised to keep their hands to themselves and to keep their weapons put away.

Ostracism is a popular form of punishment for non-violent forms of unacceptable behavior. Because of this, hermits who "don't get along with others" are numerous.•

In Defense of Lucan

THE REBEL REPORTER
—by Ed Edwards

Capital, Core, 47-1120
Ramail Daws, Head:
Office of Imperium News (OIN)

Lucan is the rightful heir to the Iridium Throne. He did not choose to occupy the throne; but in the finest tradition of Imperium nobility, when selected, Lucan did not shirk his responsibility. The order of succession after Strephon was Empress Iolanthe, Grand Princess Iphegenia, Prince Varian, Prince Lucan, and Princess Margaret. Dulinor's gang of killers brutally murdered Strephon, Iolanthe, Iphegenia, and Varian. By law Lucan is required to serve as Emperor; he does so by the traditional requirements of Imperial succession.

The vast majority of the Imperial bureaucracy in parts of the Imperium not contaminated by conspiratorial activities has followed the titular leadership of Lucan.

With the aid of loyal nobles such as Princess Margaret, Archduke Tranian, Archduke Norris, and Archduke Adair, the domains of Sylea, Gateway, Deneb, and Sol remain in the Third Imperium despite opportunistic alien attacks.

Before his rise to the throne, Lucan was briefed (on 135-1116) by Naval Intelligence. Naval Intelligence had uncovered the sinister Ilelish Plot, but too late to save Strephon. Much worse was the heinous Solomani Plot, a multifaceted plot including the Ilelish Plot.

Solomani Security (as briefed to Lucan on 135-1116; the plot ran much deeper as described by Naval Intelligence on later dates) had planned a three-pronged attack against Strephon and his heirs: indeed, against the whole Third Imperium. Only the benevolent actions of the quick-witted Lucan saved the Third Imperium from wholesale absorption by the Solomani Confederation and its lackeys.

The Ilelish Plot had taken its toll before Lucan was made aware of the situation.

The Virushi Plot, the second phase of SolSec's attack, used members of the Virushi race in Core Sector to perform the evil intentions of the Solomani. The malicious Virushi doctors at Capital were to place the minds of conspirators into the bodies of key individuals in the Grand Court of the Third Imperium! Needless to say, Lucan moved with great rapidity against the Solomani/Virushi conspirators. This whole plot was quashed within a fortnight. Virushi loyal to the Imperium were kindly freed by Lucan to continue serving it within a month of Lucan's rise to the Throne. Those Virushi who were guilty were, of course, removed from the Third Imperium for their treason against it.

The Anti-Moot Plot, the third phase of SolSec's attack, was to subvert the Moot. This unprincipled plot ran deep. Lucan was forced to dismiss the Moot until it could be determined which nobles were loyal to the Third Imperium and which were subverted by the Solomani. Loyal nobles were placed under the kindly protection of Lucan. Princess Margaret, one of the loyal faction, was sent to her secret base in the Delphi Sector for her own protection.

While SolSec executed its plan for the destruction of the Imperium, the other branches of the Solomani Confederation were busy. The Solomani Navy had prepared for decades to invade the Third Imperium. They moved as soon as word of Strephon's death crossed the Solomani/Imperium border. The Solomani Party had infiltrated all areas of the Imperium adjacent to the Confederation.

Before the crown of the Imperium was warm on Lucan's head, he moved against the thrusts of the Solomani Party. Severe intrusions into the Ilelish Domain were counteracted by Lucan securing the Daibei Sector revolt against Dulinor. In Solomani Rim Sector, Lucan's man, Archduke Adair, rallied the loyal nobility against the Solomani and inspired Princess Margaret to defend the coreward portions.

Some of the specific charges levied against Lucan are addressed below. Because many of the charges against Lucan are contradictory, the contradictory charges are paired. The critics cannot agree on Lucan's nature. This indicates his critics are driven more by the love of criticism than any desire to seek out the true nature of Lucan.

False Charge: Lucan is incompetent.
False Charge: Lucan is overbearing.

Strephon fell in his struggle against a few opponents; Lucan still stands in the face of numerous opponents. He will prevail against all enemies of the Third Imperium.

Lucan has done what he felt he had to do to preserve the Imperium in these perilous times. Other less loyal nobles have dared to suggest that the current Imperium government may not be appropriate for the modern era. Such thoughts can be called none other than what they are: treasonous. Lucan, in great distress over these disloyal nobles' acts, did what he must do to preserve the Imperium. Would we expect any less from our emperor?

False Charge: Lucan is a murderer.

Lucan has personally slain three intruders in the palace, one of whom had just slain his twin brother, Varian. Self defense is hardly murder.

False Charge: Lucan is paranoid.

Paranoia is based on unfounded fears. Lucan's fears are based on fact. A dozen factions of the Imperium are in open revolt against Lucan. One hundred twenty-seven plots against the person of the Emperor have been squashed in 1119 alone.

False Charge: Lucan is sexually immoral.
False Charge: Lucan is perversely single.

Every known sexual practice (including abstention) is considered by someone in the Imperium to be immoral. Therefore whatever sexual practices Lucan has or does not have are considered immoral by someone. As a matter of fact, Lucan is not married.

No criticism has ever been charged to Lucan which was not made against his predecessor, Strephon. Loyal citizens will ignore the whisperings and support their rightful emperor.•

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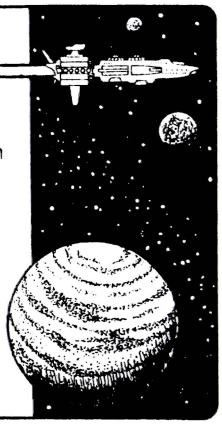

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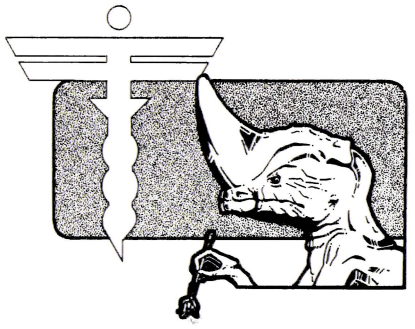


Replacement Body Parts: Prosthetics, Bionics, Regrowth and Cloning

MEDICAL DIGEST, Part 3

—by Mike Jackson and Joe D. Fugate Sr.

Portions of this article first appeared in the ***Traveller*** *fanzine* Third Imperium, *published by Mike Jackson. Parts 1 and 2 appeared in Traveller's Digest Issues 12 and 13, respectively. You will need part 2 to use the additional rules in part 3.*

In part 1 we discussed options available for replacement body parts. In part 2, we provided the game rules for prosthetics and bionics to replace lost body parts. In this issue, we wrap up the three-part series by presenting specific game rules for regrowth and cloning.

DEFINITION OF COMMON TERMS

The following definitions and concepts are used.

Prosthetics: Prosthetics are mass-produced, mechanical body parts, surgically installed by a medical professional.

Bionics: Bionics are mechanical body parts that are individually custom-designed. A bionic generally has greater functionality that the original body part.

Regrowth: Regrowth involves stimulating the body to regrow its missing part.

By tech level 9, missing limbs can be regrown, and by tech level 11, damaged non-vital organs can be regrown in place.

With regrowth the subject must wait for the biological replacement part to grow. The big advantage of regrowth, of course, is that the new body part comes automatically (and correctly) attached. Growth quickening reduces the time it takes to regrow the body part, making regrowth more convenient and more practical at the higher tech levels.

Cloning: Cloning involves taking a few cells and growing a replacement body part for the donor in an artificial womb.

By tech level 13, new body parts of any kind can be selectively cloned from the DNA of any body cell. Cloning is more convenient than regrowth since the recipient is free to do whatever he wants during the growing period. The down side of cloning comes when the new part must be attached: complicated and expensive surgery is required. Growth quickening techniques aid the cloning process by drastically reducing the time the body part must spend growing "in vitro" inside the special artificial womb; this greatly reduces the cost of the new part.

SUMMARY OF STEPS CHART

This last part of the replacement body part series includes a chart showing a summary of all the steps involved in treating injuries. The summary is a good quick-reference guide to the replacement body part options available to **MegaTraveller** characters.

REPAIRING DAMAGED PROSTHETICS AND BIONICS

If a character with prosthetics or bionics is wounded, roll on the body part location chart (step 4 of Medical Aid and Treatment) to determine which body part has been hit (it may not be the artificial body part.)

If the character receives minor damage or greater, and a prosthetic or bionic part has been hit, that part will cease to function. If the body part is an upper internal organ, the value of all three physical characteristics drops to zero, and the character dies. However, the normal death-suspension techniques covered in part 2 are still valid, and may be used to suspend the character's life on the brink of death in the hope of reviving him at a high-tech facility.

Use the normal **MegaTraveller** damage and repair rules to repair a damaged prosthetic or bionic.

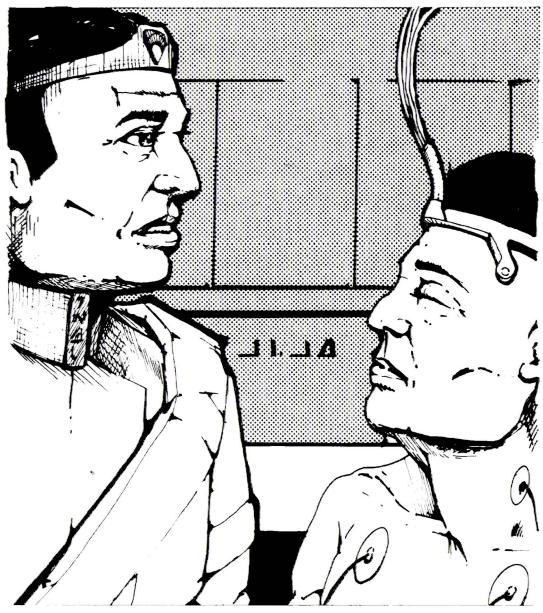
THE CHOICE — BIOLOGICAL OR NON-BIOLOGICAL?

This series has presented four major options for replacing damaged body parts: prosthetics, bionics, regrowth, and cloning. When a player is deciding which approach to take for replacing a lost body part, sometimes the decision can be difficult. Which option is best? What are the advantages? How do you narrow down the choices?

One of the best ways to use for cleanly dividing the choices is biological versus non-biological. Prosthetic and bionic replacement parts are non-biological, mechanical replacements. Regrowth and cloning create living, natural biological replacements.

Non-biological body parts do have one significant advantage over any biological equivalent: it usually takes less time to repair a damaged non-biological part than it takes to wait for the biological equivalent to heal. Growth quickening has shortened the months of waiting down to a few days at tech level 13 and beyond — but even several days is much longer than the few hours it typically takes to repair mechanical body parts.

On the other hand, a damaged non-biological body part often fails totally. There is no in between: at least a damaged biological part may be partially functional. One can see that mechanical *vital organs* are especially risky when compared to their biological replacements — waiting patiently for your non-functioning prosthetic heart to be repaired is rarely an option!•



REGROWTH (TL 9+)

1 Perform Special Amputation

The damaged body part must be removed with special amputation.

To perform special amputation on a damaged body part:

Difficult, Medical, Edu, 15 min

Referee: This task requires a surgeon (Dex 8+), otherwise increase difficulty by one level. For an internal organ, increase difficulty to Formidable.

If a superficial or minor mishap occurs, simply apply additional damage to the character.

If a major or destroyed mishap occurs, permanent damage may be taken by the character: reroll 2D on the mishap table to determine the mishap level to be used to apply the permanent damage. The referee must determine how the damage is applied: all characteristics are eligible.

2 Prepare For Body Part Regrowth

Once the damaged body part has been removed, a special dressing must be attached to stimulate regrowth of the new body part.

To dress the body part area for stimulating regrowth:

[difficulty], Medical, Edu, [time duration]

Referee: The difficulty and time duration of this task vary with the tech level of the facility. The values given below are for limbs and sensory organs; for internal organs, increase the difficulty one level and double the time duration.

TL	*Difficulty*	*Time Duration*
9	Formidable (fateful)	90 min
10	Difficult (fateful)	60 min
11	Routine (fateful)	30 min
12	Routine	20 min
13+	Routine	10 min

	Regrowth Rates			
Body Part	*TL9 1:1 (months/days)*	*TL10 10:1 (days)*	*TL12 50:1 (days)*	*TL13+ 100:1 (days)*
Arm+Hand	15/450	45	9	5
Hand Only	3/100	10	2	1
Leg+Foot	27/800	80	16	8
Foot Only	3/100	10	2	1
Sensory Organ	7/200	20	4	2
Upper Internal Organ	12/350	35	7	4
Lower Internal Organ	11/300	30	6	3

If a superficial or minor mishap occurs, simply apply additional damage to the character.

If a major mishap occurs, regrowth of the missing body part is not possible. The patient must resort to a prosthetic, bionic, or cloning.

From tech levels 9 to 11, the patient must remain at the medical facility hooked to special equipment that stimulates the regrowth. At tech level 12, the equipment becomes portable: volume 2 kl, weight 2 kg, and rental fee is Cr10 per day. The purchase price is Cr5,000, although individuals rarely purchase this equipment outright.

At tech level 13 and beyond, the special dressing includes an implant that stimulates regrowth. As the new body part grows, the implant slowly shrinks and finally flakes off once the part is fully regrown.

No matter what the tech level, if the body part is an internal organ, the patient must be on life support (a life-support suit is available at tech 9+, allowing the patient the ability to move about and yet still be on life support).

Cost: To prepare the special regrowth stimulation dressing: Cr4,000 x 1D. For internal organs, Cr4,000 x 2D. These charges are in addition to the normal fees for the special amputation surgery (covered later).

3 Monitor Progress During Regrowth

Once the special dressing has been applied, the regrowth must be periodically monitored, during which time the patient waits for the new body part to regrow.

To periodically monitor the progress of a regrowing body part:

Routine, Medical, Edu, [absolute: time duration]

Referee: Roll this task once for the entire regrowth period.Get the time duration from the table below. At tech level 9, this task is (fateful); at tech level 13+, this task becomes (unskilled OK).

If a superficial mishap occurs, the new body part has a cosmetic defect, but its function is not impaired.

If a minor mishap occurs, the new body part is not as good as the original: roll 1D and apply the result as permanent damage to the character's UPP.

If a major mishap occurs, the new body part is totally non-functional and must be replaced.

If the regrowth period must be cut short for some reason, automatically implement a mishap as follows: in first half of regrowth period, major mishap; in second half of regrowth period (but not in last 10%), minor mishap; in last 10% of regrowth period, superficial mishap.

Cost: TL 9-12, Cr50 x number of days of regrowth. TL13+, a one-time fee of Cr500.

For sensory or internal organs, return to step 9, Healing, in the Medical Aid and Treatment sequence (see last issue). Remember to assess the normal costs for surgery as per step 9.

4 Train New Limb

Newly regrown limbs need to be retrained. Before the retraining occurs, the character's UPP drops for a time.

- For a new hand, the character's original dexterity drops by 3 during the retraining period, lasting 1D x 10 days.
- For a new arm, the character's original dexterity and strength both drop by 4 during the retraining period, lasting 1D x 15 days.
- For a new foot, the character's original dexterity drops by 2 during the retraining period, lasting 1D x 10 days.
- For a new leg, the character's original dexterity and strength both drop by 3 during the retraining period, lasting 1D x 20 days.

A characteristic cannot go below 1.

Example: Bob has a newly regrown arm and foot. His old UPP was 999999. His new UPP during the retraining period is 539999. After retraining, his UPP returns to his full 999999.

Return to step 9, Healing, in the Medical Aid and Treatment sequence (see last issue). Remember to assess the normal costs for surgery as per step 9.•

CLONING (TL13+)

1 Perform Special Amputation

The damaged body part must be removed with special amputation.

To perform special amputation on a damaged body part:

Difficult, Medical, Edu, 15 min

Referee: This task requires a surgeon (Dex 8+), otherwise increase difficulty by one level. For an internal organ, increase difficulty to Formidable.

If a superficial or minor mishap occurs, simply apply additional damage to the character.

If a major or destroyed mishap occurs, permanent damage may be taken by the character: reroll 2D on the mishap table to determine the mishap level to be used to apply the permanent damage. The referee must determine how the damage is applied: all characteristics are eligible.

If the damaged body part is an internal organ, the patient must be on life support during the replacement part growing period (a life-support suit is available at tech level 9, allowing the patient the ability to move about and yet still be on life support).

2 Take DNA Seed for Clone

A DNA seed must be taken. This seed is used to start the growth of the cloned replacement body part.

To take a DNA seed for cloning a replacement body part:

Routine, Medical, Edu, 1 min

Referee: If a superficial or minor mishap occurs, the DNA seed is no good and must be retaken.

If a major mishap occurs, additional damage may be taken by the character: reroll 2D on the mishap table to determine the mishap level to be used to apply the extra damage.

3 Wait for Clone Growth

The character must wait for his cloned body part to grow — see the table below:

If the character is forced to go without his new body part, see the therapy rules in step 2 of the amputation process (in last issue) to determine the character's new UPP stats.

Cost: Cr2,000 x days of growth.

Body Part	*Growth Rates 100:1 (days)*
Arm+Hand	5
Hand Only	1
Leg+Foot	8
Foot Only	1
Sensory Organ	2
Upper Internal Organ	4
Lower Internal Organ	3

4 Certify Cloned Part Is Good

Once the growth period has passed, the newly grown part must be examined. The doctor must certify that it has grown properly and is ready to be attached.

To certify that a cloned body part has grown properly:

Routine, Medical, Edu, 10 min

Referee: If a superficial mishap occurs, the new body part has a cosmetic defect, but its function is not impaired. If the character prefers, the cloning process can be redone using a new DNA seed.

If a minor mishap occurs, the new body part is not as good as the original: roll 1D and determine the amount the character's UPP would be permanently lowered if the new part is used. The cloning process should be redone using a new DNA seed.

If a major mishap occurs, the new body part is totally non-functional and must be redone using a new DNA seed.

5 Attach New Part

Once the new body part is ready tobe attached, very complicated and dangerous surgery must be performed to attach the new body part, with all of its associated blood vessels and nerve endings properly connected.

To attach a newly cloned body part:

Formidable, Medical, Edu, 2 hours (hazardous)

Referee: A surgeon (Dex 8+) is required for this task, or it cannot be performed.

If a superficial or minor mishap occurs, simply apply additional damage to the character.

If a major or destroyed mishap occurs, permanent damage may be taken by the character: reroll 2D on the mishap table to determine the mishap level to be used to apply the permanent damage. The referee must determine how the damage is applied: all characteristics are eligible.

Cost: For special attachment surgery, cost is Cr10,000 x 2D. This charge is in addition to the normal surgery fees.

For internal organs, return to step 9, Healing, in the Medical Aid and Treatment sequence (see last issue). Also charge the regular surgery fees given in step 9.

6 Train New Limb/ Sensory Organ

Newly attached limbs and sensory organs need to be retrained. Before the retraining occurs, the character's UPP drops for a time.

- For a new hand, the character's original dexterity drops by 3 during the retraining period, lasting 1D x 10 days.
- For a new arm, the character's original dexterity and strength both drop by 4 during the retraining period,lasting 1D x 15 days.
- For a new foot, the character's original dexterity drops by 2 during the retraining period, lasting 1D x 10 days.
- For a new leg, the character's original dexterity and strength both drop by 3 during the retraining period, lasting 1D x 20 days.
- For a new eye or ear: no dexterity or strength loss. Therapy takes 1D x 5 days.
- For two new eyes, reduce dexterity to 1. Every day, the character's dexterity increases by one until it reaches its original level.
- For two new ears, reduce dexterity by 4. Every day, dexterity increases by one until it reaches its original level .

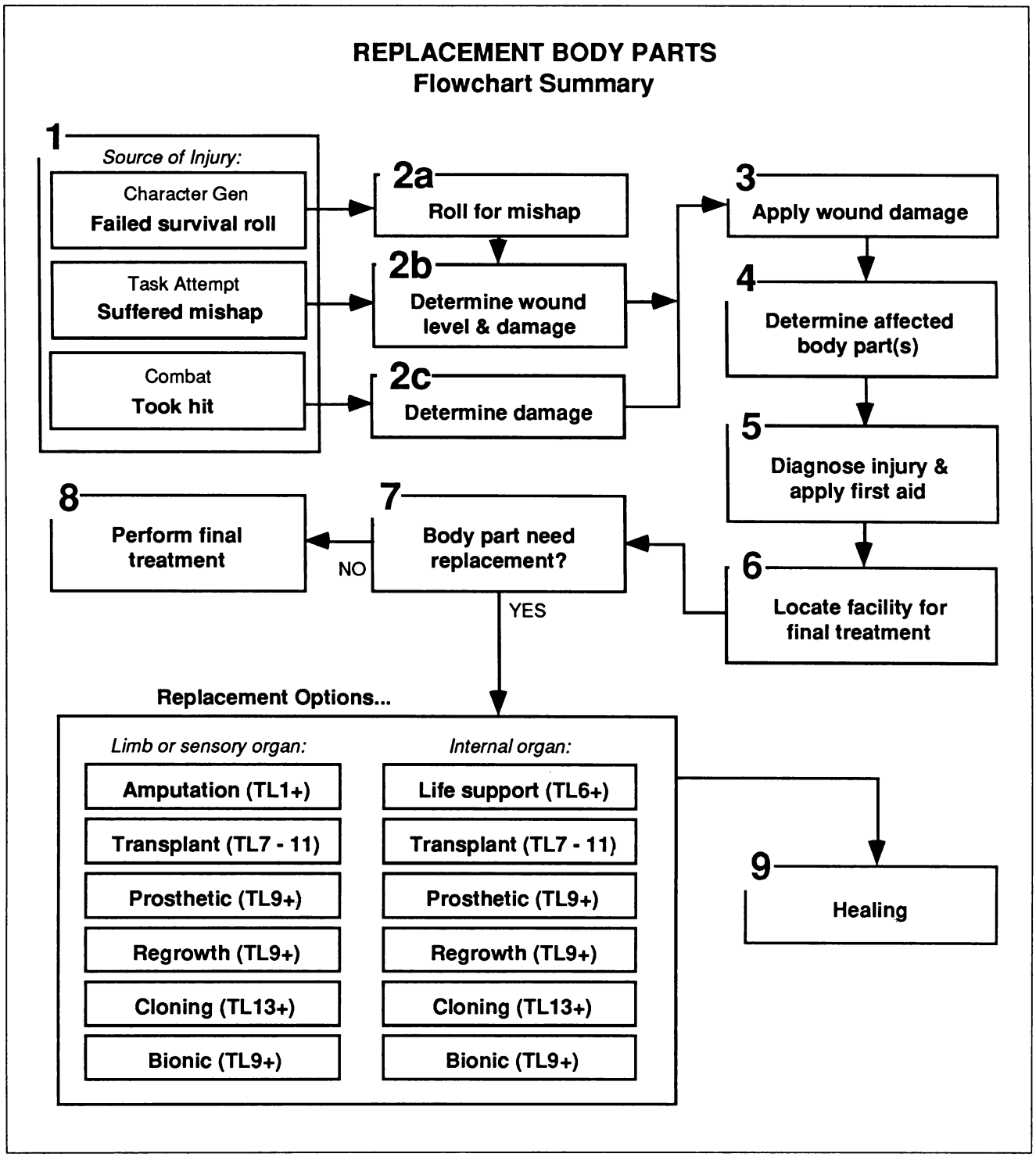
A characteristic cannot go below 1.

Example: Bob has a newly regrown arm and foot. His old UPP was 999999.

His new UPP during the retraining period is 539999. After retraining, his UPP returns to his full 999999.

Sensory Organ Example: Jim has had both ears replaced. Jim's old UPP was 899777. Jim's modified UPP becomes 859777 for a time. In four days, his UPP will be up to 899777, its original level.

Return to step 9, Healing, in the Medical Aid and Treatment sequence (see last issue). Remember to assess the normal costs for surgery as per step 9.•



SURVEY SWEEPSTAKES — Travellers' Digest 14

Let us know what you think! Photocopy the survey below, fill it out for the articles you read, and send it to: TD13 Survey Sweepstakes, 8979 Mandan Ct., Boise, ID 83709. Three names will be chosen at random to win an autographed copy of the MegaTraveller Referee's Screen. Deadline for entries is February 15, 1989.

	Didn't Read	Not Useful	Somewhat Useful	Very Useful
Adventure: Spectrum Analysis	☐	☐	☐	☐
System Survey: Ptolemy	☐	☐	☐	☐
Adventure: Ghost Ship	☐	☐	☐	☐
Rebel Reporter	☐	☐	☐	☐
Gaming Digest	☐	☐	☐	☐
Medical Digest	☐	☐	☐	☐
Magyar Library Data	☐	☐	☐	☐
Traveller Q&A	☐	☐	☐	☐
Terran Occupation Force	☐	☐	☐	☐
2300AD: Pentapod Starships	☐	☐	☐	☐
2300AD: Clarkesstar	☐	☐	☐	☐
Star Mercs	☐	☐	☐	☐

The Great Philosophical Questions

WHO AM I?

☐ Male ☐ Female

☐ 12-19 ☐ 20-29 ☐ 30-39 ☐ 40-Up

Employment:

☐ Student ☐ Military ☐ Exec./Manager

☐ Manufacturing ☐ Services

☐ Homemaker ☐ Computers/Electronics

☐ Publishing ☐ Agricultural

☐ Sales ☐ Other

WHY AM I HERE?

I have played:

☐ Traveller ☐ MegaTraveller ☐ 2300

for _____ month/years.

I am a: ☐ Player ☐ Referee ☐ Both

If you started with a MegaTraveller set, do you have any Traveller background materials?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If you are a *new* MegaTraveller player, what got you interested in the game?

Scout Brew

THE GAMING DIGEST
—by Chester Cox and Nancy Parker

The Traveller's Digest does not encourage the use of mind-altering substances. However, recognizing the prevalence of bars in the average campaign, we offer the following rules for determining the consequences of drinking to excess.

In my campaign, most taverns with a Scout clientele carry an ale-like substance which is known as "the Scout drink", "Scout ale", or just "Scout brew". Though no one will profess to *like* the stuff, it seems to be a mark of Scout camaraderie to down at least one mugful of the goo. Although the chemical makeup has never been revealed to my players (they were told, "You don't want to know!"), referees might wish to use the most visual descriptions which spring to mind: "it's syrupy with occasional viscous bubbles," or some such.

To stimulate the foolhardy, I award adventure tallies in Carousing to any person who drinks a Scout ale. If they drink it slowly, they get one AT for Carousing. Anyone who gulps it down gets two ATs for Carousing. Scout ale's bonus ATs make for interesting adventures because a character can get drunk very easily from only one drink!

To stay sober while drinking Scout brew:
Difficult, Carousing, End (hazardous, unskilled OK)
Referee: Award the character one AT in Carousing if this task is successful. If the player wishes to try a hasty attempt (gulp down the drink), also make the task fateful. If the hasty attempt is successful, award the character *two ATs* in Carousing.

The following tables detail the hazards to be encountered. Of course, these may also be used when characters are intemperate with other beverages.

Contrary to some players' perceptions, getting drunk does not constitute an adventure in itself; but coping with the results can take up many an intriguing evening of play. Roll on the tables if winging it through an adventure, or use them to plan the results and base a whole adventure on them. Referees may wish to skew the results to milder ones and use them merely as a distraction in a campaign already well under way.

ELAPSED TIME
Character comes to his normal senses after 1D/2 days.
(12 hours to 3 days)

DISPLACEMENT (1D)
Character awakens:
1 near the bar
2 near his ship
3 3D kilometers from the bar
4 5D world hexes from the bar
5 elsewhere in the system
6 on a ship in jump space

POSSESSIONS (2D: may roll twice)
Character now has on his person:
2 most of the money he started with
3 half his starting cash
4 one quarter of his cash
5 no cash at all
6 no cash and no valuables (watch, pocket computer, jewelry, etc.)
7 no cash, valuables, or outer clothing
8 numerous bruises and possible fractures
9 *more* money than he started with, in local currency or checks made out to him by people he never heard of
10 cryptic note naming a meeting place and time, or a hand-drawn map with no identifying legend
11 copy of a signed contract
12 someone's picture (nice looking! but only a first name in the mushy note on the back)

WHAT HAVE I DONE?! (3D)
Most of these will become evident only some time later, and repercussions may last for years.

Character has:

3 acquired a pet
4 acquired a spouse (or more than one, so that character is about to be sued for breach of contract)
5 acquired some real estate or a business
6 acquired a large, expensive, and totally useless item
7 insulted all his friends
8 insulted a local bigwig
9 insulted an alien ambassador
10 achieved local hero status — but how?
11 run a con game
12 run up debts equal to 1D week's pay
13 joined the service (not the branch, if any, he already belonged to)
14 joined a travelling entertainment company
15 accepted a dare, or been hired, to do some outlandish and dangerous feat
16 found some valuable item or resource
17 committed a minor crime (disturbing the peace, vandalism, etc.)
18 committed a major crime (assault, armed robbery, etc.)

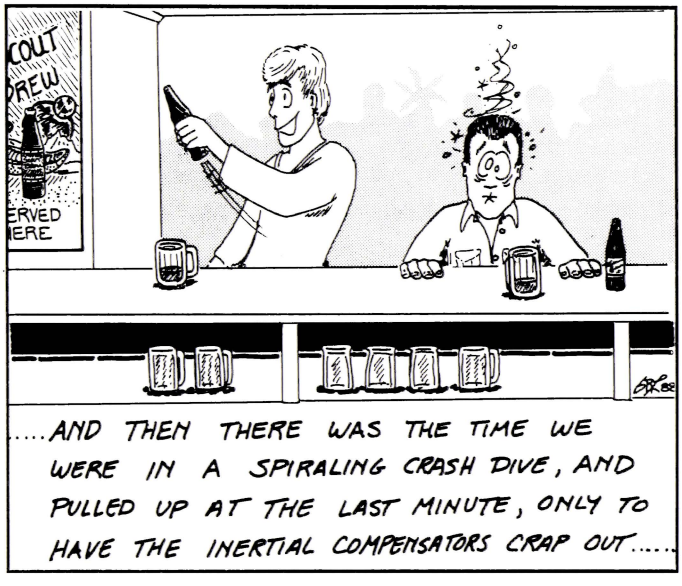
Optional item: sent paranoid X-boat messages to acquaintances in the service hierarchy, implying that a conspiracy or invasion is afoot.

IN WHOSE COMPANY (2D - 4)

When character awakens, he sees:

1 no one
2 friends, all in same condition as himself
3 strangers
4 enemies/criminals
5 animals
6 a corpse
7 police/prison guards
8 members of a Psionics Institute

So, your character could awaken 10 kilometers from the bar, surrounded by animals, having found something valuable — he's in a mine shaft full of bats, and there are gems in the walls.


.....AND THEN THERE WAS THE TIME WE WERE IN A SPIRALING CRASH DIVE, AND PULLED UP AT THE LAST MINUTE, ONLY TO HAVE THE INERTIAL COMPENSATORS CRAP OUT.....

Or, he awakens elsewhere in the system, with no money, holding a signed contract, with strangers around him, having been hired to do something — he's signed on to mine the asteroids, on a percentage basis.

Sensible people do not enter into contracts with obvious drunks, so anyone with whom the character has dealt in the intervening days is either unscrupulous, crazy, or desperate in one way or another. This makes them less likely to let him off the hook.

In unraveling the tale of the missing days, of which the character remembers nothing, he may encounter conflicting reports of what he did. He may even be framed, since the mental incapacity of drunken Scouts is legendary. Getting out of real or framed-up scrapes takes time, money, and of course, task rolls.

To break an unwanted contract:
Difficult, Legal and Persuasion, Ed, 1 day

A service sign-up is a special case. If character is already in a service, he need only prove this and his original service will straighten it out with the new one. They will then take it out of his hide. He can expect to be posted to some memorable places in the next year or so.

If he wasn't in a service, his sign-up is irrevocable.

To get a divorce:
Routine, Admin or Legal, Edu, 10 days (unskilled OK)
Referee: certain planets may make this a Difficult or even Impossible task. A mishap is an extra expense. Of course, if the character likes the new spouse, a completely different set of problems arises.

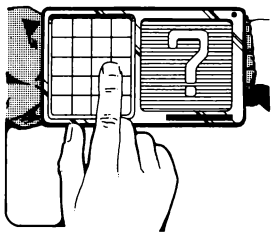
To smooth ruffled feathers of friends:
Routine, Carousing, Int, 5 min

To appease local VIPs:
Difficult, Persuasion or Bribery, Edu, 2 hours
Referee: failure may entail fines or public disgrace

To appease aliens:
Formidable, Legal or Liaison, Soc, 2 hours
Referee: failure may involve duelling, jail or public disgrace

To get a plea of temporary insanity or diminished responsibility past the local judicial establishment:
Difficult, Legal, Ed, 5 days
Referee: in most dictatorships this is Formidable; in most religious governments and with lynch mobs it is Impossible.

Lawyers are costly (and not always available on some worlds), but helpful in a number of these tasks. Use the lawyer's skills instead of the player's. A lawyer (if available) costs about 2D x Cr10 per hour of his time.•



Traveller Q&A

OFFICIAL ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS

Traveller Q&A provides answers to questions from readers on various aspects of **MegaTraveller**, and **2300AD**. If you have a question you would like to have answered, send it to: Digest Group Publications, Q&A, 8979 Mandan Ct., Boise, ID 83709. We will publish the best of these questions and answers in this column.

The new **2300AD** rules are now available. If you have questions for **2300AD**, by all means send them in. All answers for **2300AD** questions are reviewed by GDW's **2300AD** line manager, Lester Smith. As always, every answer published for **MegaTraveller** is seen and approved by Marc W. Miller, the game's creator.

We want to stress to our readers that the answers appearing in **Traveller Q&A** are *official* unless explicitly stated to be a variant.

MegaTraveller Errata: If you send us a business-sized SASE with *two* stamps on it, we will send you the latest **MegaTraveller** errata sheets (dated 10/1/88). These sheets not only correct various inconsistencies in the rules, they include many valuable clarifications and suggestions. This errata is also available on the DELPHI computer net in the RPG Galactic Times library area.

MEGATRAVELLER QUESTIONS

Do the advanced system characters get the default skills for their tech level, rank, and service? — W.W.

Yes and no. The advanced characters *do* get the default skills for their tech level, but they do *not* get the default rank and service skills.

The default skills for tech level come about by virtue of the character's experience on his homeworld, and therefore occur *before* character generation starts. No matter which character generation system is used, a character starts with these same default skills.

The default rank and service skills are not received, however. On page 45 of the *Players' Manual*, it states: "Term skills as called for in basic character generation are not rolled for, nor are rank and service abilities [skills] received; the skills received from the specific assignments in advanced character generation substitute for them."

One of our goals with **MegaTraveller** was to bring the two classic **Traveller** character generation systems back in line with each other, so that both systems produce characters with similar skill levels. In order to do this, we give the four-year system character simplified ways of getting extra skills: one of these ways is the default rank and service skills. This way, either system will produce characters of equivalent skill levels.— *Joe D. Fugate Sr.*

Could a cautious task be performed for direct fire, perhaps necessitating a complete turn of "aiming"? Or what about a hasty task allowing double attacks in a single turn? — W.W.

Yes, this is an excellent application of the task system to combat. While we give "canned" tasks throughout the rules in **MegaTraveller**, they are meant to be suggestions rather than chiseled in stone.

When we referee a playtest here at Digest Group Publications, we "wing it" a lot, and do not consult the rules as much as you might expect. The task system lends itself very well to this kind of play. We feel it is more important to keep up the excitement level and to keep the game moving than it is to be a constant slave to the rules. In fact, it was the lack of consistent rules for "on the fly" adventuring that led us to develop the task system in the first place.

Having stated our philosophy on the rules and the task system, let's examine your suggestions a bit closer.

For a given direct fire combat task, if the player specifies a cautious attempt (and he succeeds at his determination roll), he takes his entire turn by just staying put and carefully aiming. As a result, the "to hit" task becomes one level easier. Yes, we heartily agree with such an application of the task system: a very clever act on the part of the player if he has a good determination DM.

The converse is the hasty direct fire attempt. Although the difficulty goes up by one level, if the player succeeds, he gets double attacks (sort of a semi-panic fire attack). Again, a clever application of the task system.

Frequent and sensible use of the task system adds a lot of meaty adventuring to a night's session. In our experience, the task system invites the players to seek clever solutions such as yours. And a cleverly solved task can be a memorable event the players will talk about for months on end. It is these moments that make a **MegaTraveller** session a real delight to play.— *Joe D. Fugate Sr.*

In the *Referee's Manual* Craft Design section, both holographic linked and dynamic linked control panel units are listed. Holographic linked units take more power, and are more expensive than dynamic linked units. Why would anyone ever install holographic linked units in a craft design? — D.C.

For a given control point (CP) value, in many ways, holographic linked controls are a luxury when compared to dynamic linked controls.

But there's more to it than that. For purposes of this discussion, here are the values for these two types of control panel units reprinted from page 81 of the *Referee's Manual:*

For a given amount of CP return, the CP to power, CP to weight, and CP to price ratios are worse for holographic linked panels than they are for dynamic linked panels. However, the CP to volume ratio is better for holographic linked panels than for dynamic linked panels. If volume is a problem in your craft design, consider holographic linked panels instead of dynamic linked panels.

TL	*Type*	*Power*	*Vol*	*Wt*	*Cr*	*CP*
10	Dynamic Linked	0.001	0.02	0.01	500	1.0
13	Holographic Linked	0.002	0.03	0.02	1000	1.5

There's another less obvious aspect of holographic versus straight dynamic panels. In your car, wouldn't a plain mechanical speedometer be cheaper than your expensive digital LED speedometer? But the digital speedometer does give your speed as "57.1 MPH" instead of "about 55 MPH".

Similarly, wouldn't it be cheaper just to put a few simple mechanical gauges in the cockpit of an F-16, instead of the fancy electronic and computer gear that's in there now? The extra "control points" the F-16 pilot gains from the fancier instrumentation pay off in improved response time in the heat of combat.

So it is with holographic versus straight dynamic control panels. While the holographic units tend to use more resources, the extra edge of control given to the operator may make the difference when a split-second decision is called for. — *Joe D. Fugate Sr.*

Don't fib (fiber optic) computers already have electronic circuit protection? Why even have circuit protection if you have an fib computer model installed in your craft? — B.C.

It might seem that fiber optic computers and electronic system protection are the same at first glance. They are, however, not the same. I can understand your confusion; the rules are not as clear as they should be on this topic.

Fiber optic computers are good only against radiation hits in starship combat. Electronic circuit protection applies to all types of hits. The internal explosion table has two computer-1 results listed on it. Because the surface explosion table has results that tell you to consult the internal explosion table, it is also possible to get surface hits that affect the computer.

To implement the protecting effects of electronic circuit protection in starship combat, ignore every odd-numbered hit on the computer. So, if the ship has electronic curcuit protection, ignore the first computer hit, the third computer hit, the fifth computer hit, and so on. — *Joe D. Fugate Sr.*

Agility in MegaTraveller starship design seems all wrong. Slower starships tend to have more agility, while faster starships with more maneuver gees have less agility. This isn't at all the way *High Guard* starship design worked. Isn't this a mistake? — S.O.

In the original *High Guard* system, agility was defined as an attribute of maneuver drive, or "how effectively my drive can out-maneuver yours". In the new **MegaTraveller** rules, separating out weight and volume into unique craft attributes made it clear to us that agility needed to be more precisely defined as its own unique attribute, related to ship mass, *not* to ship speed.

So then, under the new rules, agility is defined as the "ability to change a craft's orientation over time". This makes agility more a function of ship mass (that is, its weight) than merely a different aspect of maneuver speed. Under this new definition, it quickly becomes apparent that smaller vessels will tend to have a greater agility than larger vessels.

Consider: which is faster, the *Queen Mary*, or a rowboat? The *Queen Mary*, no question. Now then, which can change its heading more quickly? The rowboat clearly has the greater agility, even though its "maneuver drive" speed rating is far less than the *Queen Mary's*. As you can see, when agility is defined this way, speed has very little to do with it.

It's not so much that a slow starship has more agility and a fast starship has less agility. What's really happening is the fast starship devotes its hull volume to drives and fuel for pure speed. Very little of the hull volume is left to install extra power plant output just for the purpose of raising the ship's agility.

Personally, I find the new design rules both more challenging and more realistic (read: *more fun*). Now, if I load up my craft with a bunch of massive stuff, down goes the agility in a big hurry. About the only way to get both a very agile vessel *and* a very fast vessel is to leave out the jump drive. Suddenly, the non-jump capable system defense boat looks like a very feasible design philosophy. — *Joe D. Fugate Sr.*•

2300AD QUESTIONS

Do I need to get the new 2300AD rules if I already have the original set? What's different in the new rules? — M.S.

A good place to look for an in-depth answer to your question is the article in GDW's *Challenge Issue 34*, entitled "The 2300AD Revision". There the game's line-manager, Lester Smith, talks about why the game was revised and how it was changed from the first edition.

The revision has 100 more pages than the first edition set. Most of this new material is background, new illustrations, examples, and a solitaire adventure.

Though it is useful to have the extra information in the new set, it is not essential for the play of any of the old or new adventures and modules. Little has changed in the rules themselves. — *Rob Caswell*

(One of my favorite parts of the new set is the wealth of material on the various **2300AD** alien races, including a very enlightening illustration by Rob showing the various aliens standing together with a human. Just the extra material on the aliens alone makes the revised **2300AD** set worth buying in my book, but I'm a gaming addict. —*Joe D. Fugate Sr.)*

In the first edition Traveller:2300 *Referee's Manual*, the *ISV-5* has a listed stutterwarp range of 8.9 light years. Both the *Tallyrand*-class battleship and *Kennedy*-class cruiser introduced in *Star Cruiser* have ranges of 8.7 light years. However, in the first edition *Players' Manual*, it says, on page 44, "Speed Limit: Maximum 7.7 light years travel between stars;...". Is this rule wrong or are those ships' ranges misprinted? — M.G.

The listed ranges on those ships are, indeed, incorrect. The range of 7.7 light years is the physical limit for any **2300AD** starship, unless extended artificially with some dismantled dual-drive arrangement such as a stutterwarp tug. Travelling a distance greater than 7.7 light years without discharging all operable drives is beyond modern science in the game's time, and currently thought to be impossible.

The revised **2300AD** rules clearly state that 7.7 light years is the stutterwarp range limit, period. You will also find the new set gives the correct range for the *ISV-5* and the *Kennedy*-class cruiser. Extending a ship's range using stutterwarp tugs (first introduced in *Travellers' Digest Issue 11*) is thoroughly discussed in the new edition. — *Rob Caswell*•

THOUGHTS & IMAGES

ALBEDO

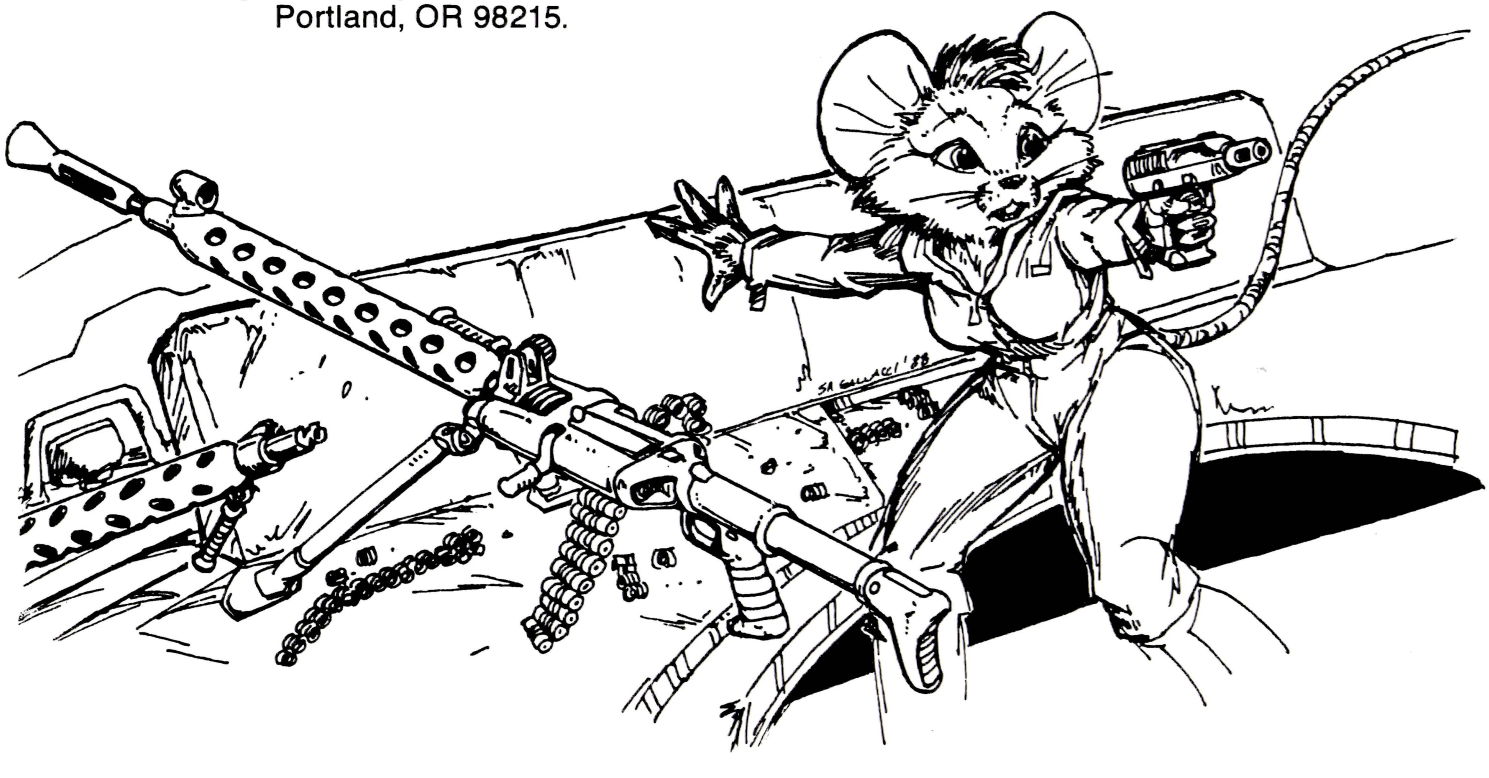
THE ROLE-PLAYING GAME

ALBEDO, Anthropomorphics, and its feature story *Erma Felna, EDF* broke new ground with its serious science-fiction story and attractive "funny-animal" art, well before the great black and white comic explosion. The story examines a wide range of social and political issues besetting a young interstellar civilization while following the career of an aerospace pilot officer and her various misadventures.

ALBEDO, the Role-Playing Game, takes the well-developed background and incorporates it into a straight forward system that also provides for developing well-rounded characters and encourages thoughtful interpersonal activity in scenarios rich in socio-political potentials, rather than typical fire power fantasies. The game is a close tie-in with the comic, having the art and editing done by Steve Gallacci, the story creator, and is written by Paul Kidd, an experienced Australian gamer and fan of the *Erma* story.

The basic game set includes three rule books and a sample scenario in a box. Further scenarios and background books are in the works, as well as figures and vehicles. Since Thoughts & Images publishes both the game and the original comic, we have available all the related material for both the player and reader. Ask your retailer about it or, if necessary, ask us directly.

Thoughts & Images, P.O. Box 15168
Portland, OR 98215.



The Uniforms of the Terran Occupation Force

—by David C. Nilsen

The Marines most likely to be encountered while visiting Terra are those on patrol or engaged in community relations activities. The uniforms of the former are Field Dress; those of the latter are Barracks or Shirt Sleeve order.

Field Dress is the standard combat environment suit (CES): a ballistic cloth armor providing coverage from neck to toe and worn open at the wrist. Though used quite effectively by mercenary units at average stellar tech levels, it is an almost unknown piece of Marine equipment. This is because the Marine trademark is the fearsome Imperial Combat Armor or battle dress. This armor is used almost exclusively in Marine operations due to its technological and moral force: it is one of the preeminent symbols of sheer Imperial power. It is for precisely this reason that the battle dress is not worn on Terra. Successful peacekeeping policy has relied on down-playing the overt threats that would fan Solomani opposition. The CES is considered to be perfectly serviceable protection for troops in a stabilized environment as on Terra. However, should a patrol column come under fire, the relief troops standing by in the Operations Bases and Orbital Response Force would arrive in battle dress.

Marine issue CESs are equipped with the chameleon IR suppressor, but are not intended for pressurization and do not have the helmet ring, oxygen attachments, or gauntlets that many CESs include. Marines simply wear battle dress into such an environment, including one with a likelihood of chemical or biological agents. The Marine CES is then virtually indistinguishable from a coverall uniform. A single magnetic fastener strip from the throat to the crotch closes the uniform. Only four zippered pockets are allowed, on the breasts and thighs, as it is the troopers' web gear that carries their equipment. The Marines' CESs have a sleek fitted look that comes from elastic panels and tightened tailoring. These uniforms come in six different camouflage patterns.

Rank is worn on both upper sleeves for enlisted men and atop both shoulders for commissioned personnel. Both officers and enlisted men bear their rank on the front and rear of their head gear.The "Cross" system of enlisted rank marking, in effect from 979, denotes E-1 to E-3 with, respectively, no discs, one disc at the left, and one disc each on the left and right edges of the square. E-4 to E-6 add a disc at the top, and E-7 to E-9 add one at the bottom edge.

Appended to the bottom of the rank square is a triangle, point down, bearing the branch in which the Marine is currently enlisted, which does not necessarily correspond to the type of unit to which he currently belongs.

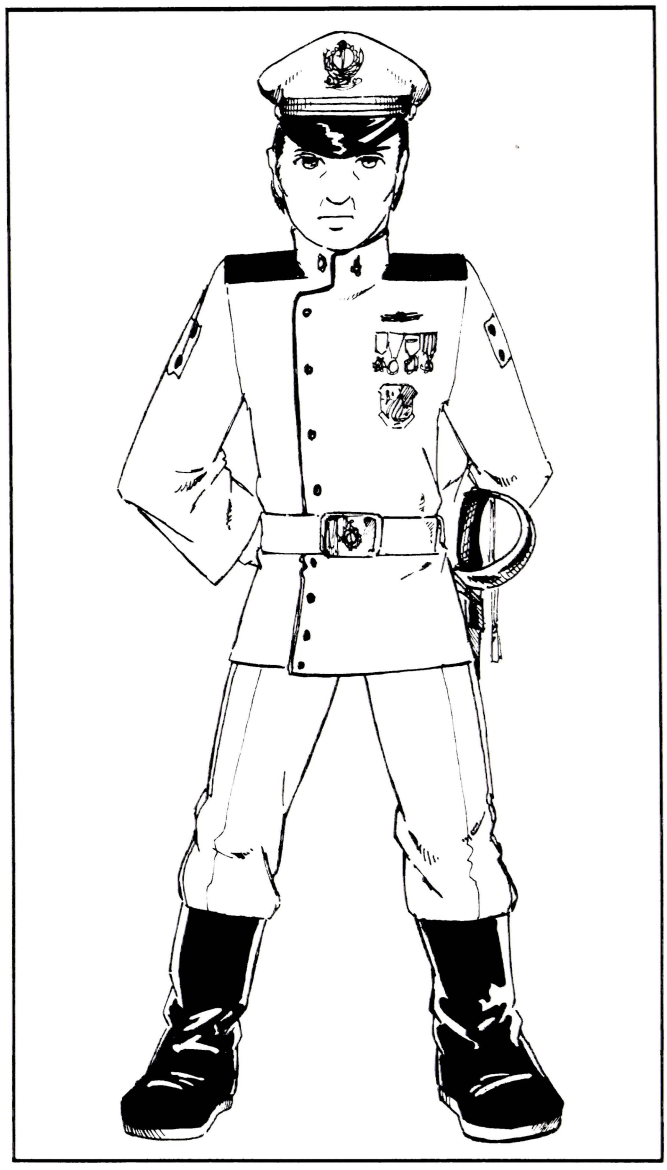
The common denominator in these insignia is the cutlass, the distinctive Marine marking. With the exception of the cavalry branch, in which the cutlass is raised as in the charge, insignia depictions of the cutlass show it with its point down, signifying that all Marines are trained drop troops. The Army trains only its elite troops in assault jumping. Marines are quick to point out this difference, and smugly wear a blank spot on their left breast where jump wings are worn, signifying the lowliest Marine cook has no need to display what elite Army troops wear with pride. When crossed with another object, the cutlass is hilt to the upper right, point lower left, always on top of the object with which it is crossed.

Line Marine or "infantry" wear the crossed laser rifle and

Rank for enlisted Marines is denoted by a pattern of small discs on a square patch. These insignia are worn in tribute to the 910th Imperial Marine Regiment which was annihilated to the last man in 979 during the opening weeks of the Third Frontier War. Prior to that time the Marines had worn a system of chevrons to indicate enlisted rank, part of the Solomani heritage that permeated the Imperial armed forces. Due to the rapid conquest of the Vilani Imperium by Terran forces it became almost axiomatic that Solomani military traditions and procedures were superior to Vilani. When Cleon and his nobles were founding the Third Imperium, they chose to base their Imperial military on Solomani rather than Vilani antecedents, thereby utilizing this public perception. This idea persists today in the majority of military rituals and operating assumptions. Indeed, it was not until 679 that Solomani power at the court was broken by the marriage of Emperor Zhakirov to Antiama.

Three hundred years later, Emperor Styryx faced a resurgent Solomani Confederation that challenged the sovereignty of the Imperium. The stand of the 910th provided Emperor Styryx the opportunity to make a veiled threat to the Solomani Confederation. However, he carefully phrased it in other terms to avoid offending Imperial Solomani. Styryx professed that all of the Imperial armed forces, but most notably the Marines, had stained their honor during the Civil War by repeatedly slaughtering their own comrades in arms in order to push first one, then another barracks emperor onto the throne. While they had not had an opportunity to redeem themselves in the ensuing several centuries of peace, the sacrifice of the 910th regained the Imperial Marines' honor. Styryx directed that the rank insignia of enlisted Marines commemorate the tactical markings of the companies and battalions of the 910th: "constellations" of discs on a dark background, variations on the 910th's insignia which referred to the "Warrior's Cross" constellation visible from the regiment's home system.

The emperor was concerned more with the Solomani issues left him by his mother than by the Zhodani hordes that martyred the 910th. Thus Styryx, a Marine himself while a prince, arranged to eliminate the Solomani references from the uniforms of his finest shock troops.



cutlass. Cavalry is a winged, mailed fist clutching a short cutlass; this symbol is painted on most vehicles assigned to cav units. Artillery personnel wear the cutlass crossed with a battlefield rocket of the type currently deployed in Marine MRL batteries; regularly updated so that the rocket depicts the current inventory, the crossed figures are surmounted by the Greek letter "pi". Combat engineers are signified by a stone wall being struck in two by a horizontal cutlass. Military police units cross a cutlass with a billy club atop a riot shield. Commando units are signified by a skeletal hand holding a three-bladed cutlass, referring to the ground, space, and covert aspects of their mission. Most of the insignia of the support arms consist of the cutlass crossed with some traditional tool of the arm's trade, such as a quill for financial/legal, a key for quartermaster/supply, a lamp for training, and a wrench for maintenance/repair. Medical is alone among the support insignia in not bearing some form of the cutlass, being instead a simple caduceus.

Senior NCOs (SNCOs) occupy a special place in the military hierarchy, that of appointment rank, when serving as the senior NCO in a company, battalion, or regiment. An SNCO who is most senior will be appointed as company sergeant major (CSM, usually E-7), battalion sergeant major (BSM, usually E-8), or the regimental sergeant major (RSM, E-9). These ranks dispense with the Cross insignia and instead carry a device on the sleeve just above the cuff, the Imperial sunburst for CSM, sunburst in a wreath for BSM, and a larger wreathed sunburst surmounted by the Imperial Crown for RSM.

Officer's rank is according to the Joint Imperial Services or JIS system, used by all Imperial Armed Forces by order of Emperor Martin V, who grew weary during his short reign of having to know four different systems to identify officers of the different services. The unified insignia consist of one to three silver sunbursts, called "pips", for rank O-1 to O-3, one to three gold pips for O-4 to O-6, and one to four gold four-pointed stars for O-7 to O-10. These are worn atop each shoulder and in the center of the chest on the CES. The silver and gold are worn as black and gray respectively on the field dress.

Additional markings for both officers and enlisted are the tapes above the breast pockets: "MARINES" in black on backing color above the left and the trooper's surname in black on white above the right. The collar flaps are of the lay-down type and carry the sunburst on the right and the Marine crest on the left, the sunburst with a vertical cutlass atop it. Both are in black. The left breast is the authorized location for "wings" although only EVA and pilot's wings for those who have earned them are worn on the field dress and barracks uniforms as noted above. Marines are only required to wear their jump wings on service and full dress uniforms.

The left shoulder bears the regimental patch, above the enlisted rank markings, and, in the case of certain special assignment troops, a semicircular legend called a "tab" at the very top of the left sleeve, on the seam. For example, the Imperial Marine Garrison on Terra bears the "TERRA" tab in black on maroon in this way. The right shoulder carries the branch insignia of the unit currently assigned to, also above the rank insignia, which may be different from the branch in which the Marine is currently enlisted.

All of these markings are cloth and not part of the IR flash circuitry and, save the Marines tape, are attached by loops and hooks for removal when the uniform is made "tactical".

Headgear is either the field cap or helmet. The helmet provides all-around protection to the head and ears, and looks similar to a pilot's helmet. It includes a polarizing visor with a heads-up display that can be linked to the trooper's weapon by an untraceable, extremely short-ranged weapon-mounted radio. The helmet can thereby project a targeting "pipper" as well as technical readouts onto the HUD. Both helmet and field cap contain an integral multi-channel radio with directional condenser mike and ear-phones (bone conduction types housed in the headband to keep the ears free). Voice recognition circuits in the controls allow the radio channel to be selected by speaking the channel number.

Though effective, the CES is uncomfortable due to its weight and bulk, necessitating another uniform for utility wear. This is the barracks or shirt sleeves order, a uniform with the same cut as the CES, but made of light, non-ballistic cloth and worn as separate shirt and pants. Style and placement of markings are identical to the CES, except that it has no tactical use and thus always carries colorful, non-subdued markings. Officer's insignia are silver and

gold, and carried on cloth slides that fit onto cloth loops atop the shoulders. Enlisted rank and branch patches are in white on branch color backgrounds. Regimental insignia are also in full color, and the sunburst and Marine crest appear in maroon.

This uniform comes in the same fabric selection as the CES, plus a dark shade of khaki, and, for warm climates, comes with short sleeves. With the short sleeve variation SNCO appointment rank cuff insignia are worn in silver, gold for RSM, on leather wristbands on the right wrist only. Headgear with barracks dress is the field cap, although some units affect idiosyncratic wear, such as the Terran garrison's predilection for its maroon berets.

The barracks dress is the basis of the official uniform of the Marine Corps of Military Police, MCMP. They wear the khaki version of the uniform with a glossy white Sam Browne belt that carries holsters for a snub pistol and billy club. On the left shoulder is worn a hard black brassard with a maroon and sky-blue braided aigulette attached to the whistle in the left breast pocket. The brassard bears a large white MP on the bottom, and the insignia of the local command jurisdiction, for example a north polar projection of Terra in blue and white with a white TERRA curving around it for the Terran garrison. White gloves and the standard helmet, painted maroon with MP in black, are worn with the uniforms.

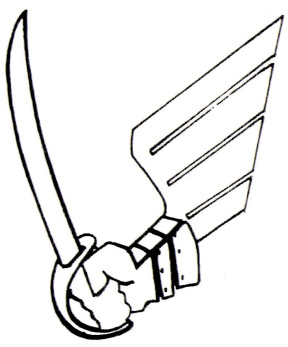
A popular attraction on Terra is the spectacular Changing of the Garrison and attendant Trooping of the Color ceremonies which occur each time the regiments are rotated into and out of duty at the three starports each month. These are public occasions where the full strength of the departing regiment and one battalion of the arriving regiment parade with their regimental colors streaming and their bands blaring. The cavalry units are mounted on Terran horses decked with colorful saddles and bridles.

The parading units wear Marine full dress, surely one of the most impressive military uniforms in the Imperium. This is the standard Marine full dress, and should not be confused with the uniform of the Marine Guards. The Guards uniform is unique to that regiment and is designed to match the dress of the Army's Imperial Guard units (see *Travellers' Digest* Issue 9).

Each of the Marine branches once had a dress uniform which bore a branch color as piping on the pants and tunic and as a background on the rank shoulderboards. These colors can still be found today in the background color of the regimental flags: maroon for line Marines, yellow for cavalry, gray for artillery, sky blue for support arms, and black for commandos. In 629 Arbellatra decreed the abolition of all branch colors on Marine uniforms, saying, "ALL Marines are riflemen." She additionally eliminated the use of the branch insignia as part of the rank insignia for enlisted personnel. However, as these markings proved so useful in combat, her decree was ignored for tactical and later barracks uniforms, and went into effect only on dress uniforms.

The Marine service dress and full dress uniforms consist of a maroon tunic with a standing collar and a single line of gold buttons fastening a slightly asymetrical flap down the front, just right of center. All buttons are embossed with the regimental crest or number. Enlisted tunics are piped in black, giving them a harder-edged appearance than the unpiped officers' tunics. Trousers are in black for service and white for full dress, with a maroon stripe down the outside of the legs, piped with gold for general officers. Boots are black and highly polished. Blousing of the trousers over the boot tops varies with regimental tradition and can depend on whether or not the unit has been "blooded" recently. "Straight legs" are often the sign of a unit looking for a combat assignment, and are cause for much barroom warfare.

Rank on service and full dress for enlisted is shown by silver discs on black patches. On service dress, officers' rank is carried on the cuffs in the form of gold braid stripes: 1 for O-1, 1-1/2 for O-2, 2 for O-3, 2-1/2 for O-4, 3 for O-5, and 4 for O-6. General and flag officers wear one extra-wide stripe for O-7 plus one to three additional regular stripes for O-8 to O-10.



The rank and branch patches for field dress as well as the analogous markings on the battle dress have a useful feature for night combat. The insignia are wired into the chameleon surface of the suits themselves. They can be set to "flash" their markings at discrete, pre-set IR frequencies, thus allowing cooperating units to identify each other more readily with night vision equipment. Units set their insignia flashes at a frequency that will allow them to be just visible to IR goggles given the temperatures expected that night. This flash is triggered by a querying pulse of infrared sent by Marine issue IR goggles at the touch of a switch, and lasts for three seconds, enough time for a trooper to recognize the insignia of the person he is looking for. As this system operates in line of sight only, and only when queried by Marine issue equipment, it makes minimal inroads on unit security after dark and pays off hugely in preventing confusion and fratricidal fire. As a visual system, it also keeps the communications circuits less cluttered by simple ID checks.

It was this equipment that made Styryx's insignia change meaningful. As the Solomani Confederation was a former Imperial region and equipped with Imperial technology, Solomani and Imperial troops would risk identifying each other as friendly if changes were not made. This leads to a misconception among modern Imperial citizens that the insignia change resulted from confusion at the start of the Solomani Rim War, when in fact the changes had been in place for eleven years.

On full dress, officers' rank moves from the cuff to hard black shoulderboards, using the stripe system in gold up to O-6, and the JIS stars on gold for O-7 and above.

Collar devices are the Imperial sunburst on the right and the branch insignia on the left, both in gold, except for the 2666th, 4217th, and 4545th Regiments. As spearheads of the Terran invasion, these units are authorized to wear the Marine crest in place of the sunburst, the only units in Imperial service to be accorded this honor.

Branch of the unit currently assigned is shown on the right shoulder in black and gold. The service dress allows a name plate on the right breast, but not the full dress. Ribbons and all authorized wings are worn on service, with full medals in place of ribbons on full dress. All insignia are metal. The silver wings that can be worn are, in order of precedence, Marine flight, jump, and EVA. Precedence placement runs from top to bottom, left to right. Dress uniforms do not carry unit patches on the shoulder, but rather bear the regimental crest as a metal badge on the lower right breast, at the height where a pocket would be. Special service troops wear special badges in place of these crests, such as General, Admiralty, Ambassadorial or Imperial Staff, or the Terran Occupation Badge for troops so authorized.

All ranks wear a polished white sword belt with the cutlass, officers on the left hip and enlisted men on the right, with a small silk wrist cord in branch color hanging from the hilt. Enlisted men wear black gloves with full dress, while officers wear white. Headgear for the dress uniform is the peaked cap. The Marine crest is just below the peak in gold for enlisted and in a larger gold and silver for officers. The visor is black for all ranks and bears one to three rows of silver braid for SNCO's, and one, two, or three rows of gold braid for company grade, field grade, and general officers.

A full regiment of 3500 Marines marching in these uniforms with the battle honors pennants streaming from their colors is a sight not soon forgotten. And, at least as far as the Marines themselves are concerned, it is not a sight that is likely to disappear from Terra anytime soon. They paid for their place on Terra, and they intend to keep it.•

An unofficial modification to all Marine uniforms is the combat drop "slash" on the back of the collar. It is worn as a small vertical cloth strip, black on field and barracks dress and scarlet on service and full dress uniforms, by any Marine who has conducted a drop under hostile conditions. During the early 700s the Navy issued new uniform regulations intended in part to crack down on the wearing of unauthorized insignia. One item particularly targeted for elimination was the drop slash. However, the Marines tenaciously hung onto it for several years until 712 when Empress Margaret I was awarding a Starburst for Extraordinary Heroism to a Marine following a particularly grim police action. After placing the ribbon about the trooper's neck, she ordered "About face!" and again, "About face!". Smiling, she leaned close to the Marine, and in a stage whisper said, "I'm glad to see you're still wearing it. Don't ever let them take it away from you." The persecution of the slash rapidly ended.

PENTAPOD SURVEY VESSEL

Original Date of Design: Unknown
Builder: Pentapods
First Example Laid Down: Unknown
First Example Completed: Unknown
Streamlining: None
Sensors Package: Navigation, Deep System Scan, Gravitational Scan, Advanced Cartographic, Advanced Life, Active, Passive
Nerve Clusters:
Central: Pilot/Captain Navigation, Communication, Engineering
Tactical: Passive, Active, Remote, Flight Controller
Engineering: 5
Work Stations and Crew: 3 Stations; 3 Crew: Steward, Medic, Security

PERFORMANCE CHARACTERISTICS:
Warp Efficiency: 2.3 (1.9 Using Laser)
Power Plant: 5
Endurance: 30 Days (Full Power)
Thruster Fuel: None
Range: 7.7LY
Mass: 1,267 Tons with Typical Load
Passengers: 11 (May include Scientists)
Cargo Capacity: 134 Cubic Meters
Comfort: 0 (Combat Purposes Only)
Emergency Power: N/A
Total Life Support: 357 Days
Equivalent Price: 15.361 MLv (+1.96 ADJ) (Does not include Lander or Remote)
Movement: 5 (4 Using Laser)
Screens: 0
Radiated Signature: 3
Radial Reflected: 5(6*) *Only if all optional sensors are used
Lateral Reflected: 6
Weapons: 1 Pentapod Defensive Laser in Masked Turret
Targetting Nerve Cluster: Yes
Radial Profile: -3
Lateral Profile: -1
Hull Type: Viscous
Armor: 0
Hull Hits: 5/2/1
Power Plant Hits: 8/4
Active Sensors: 7
Passive Sensors: 12
Ship's Vehicles: Pentapod Multi-Purpose Lander, Pentapod Remote
Other Systems: None

With its extensive life support, the Pentapod Survey Vessel can remain in a system for a long period of time. It also makes travelling away from established systems easier. The ship's vehicles add versatility to the mission. The multi-purpose lander will frequently carry some form of ground vehicle for explorations of a world's surface.

PENTAPOD SPACECRAFT, PART 2

NAVAL ARCHITECT'S MANUAL, Supplemental File: PENTAPOD STARSHIPS
—By William W. Connors; sidebars by Mark Gelinas

INTRODUCTION

Of all the races which mankind has encountered during its drive to the stars none has proved to be more mysterious and fascinating than the Pentapods. The fact that they have been able to attain a level of technology which is almost equal to that of human beings but which is based wholly on the genetic manipulation of existing life forms has amazed terran scientists for decades.

In this text, we shall examine the often fascinating manner in which the Pentapods have overcome the hazards, problems, and puzzles of space travel without ever having invented such basic building blocks of terran science as the wheel.

As in the basic rules for terran starship construction, we will use cubic meters (m3) to measure volumes, square meters (m2) for definition of surface area, tons for the calculation of mass, and livres (Lv) or Mega-livres (MLv) for explanations of cost. Where required, exact descriptions of other units will be given in the body of the manual.

1. CONCEPTUALIZATION

Pentapod starships fall into the same basic categories as those built by human beings. The most important thing to keep in mind while designing Pentapod starships is that they are just that. They are fully aware, living beings whose ancestry can be traced back to the early explorers that travelled onto the land masses of the Pentapod homeworld thousands of years ago. Just as these unusual aliens have altered themselves to adapt to various environments on various worlds, so too have they changed themselves to allow travel between the stars. This is often a very difficult concept for those not familiar with the Pentapods to grasp.

SHIP CLASSIFICATIONS: Despite the unique nature of Pentapod starships, they fall into the same basic groupings as terran vessels: Large ships, small ships, and remote objects. Unlike large and small ships, which are self-aware living creatures, remotes are generally simple animals which are controlled by natural (that is, organic) radio, maser, or laser exchanges with the mother craft. They have been described by more than one observer as pets or seeing-eye dogs.

2. POWER PLANT

Unlike Terran spacecraft, which generate power on a continuous basis, Pentapod ships have a power reserve which provides them with energy for a limited period of time. When they enter a solar system, they recharge by setting up an electrical current flow between their lighted (hot) side and dark (cold) side.

The specifications for a craft's power cells are listed as an output rating (in megawatts) and a duration (in days). For example, a 5/10 power cell would provide 5 megawatts of power for 10 days. A cell which is run at half power will last twice as long and so forth.

The volume which is taken up by the power cell is equal (in cubic meters) to the square root of the total of the output (in megawatts) squared plus the duration (in days) squared. The mass of a power cell is equal to its volume and its cost (in MLv) is equal to 1/10 of the volume. To illustrate, the 5/10 power cell given above would require a volume of 11.18 m3, mass 11.18 tons, and cost 1.18 MLv.

A Pentapod craft which is out of power is dead and ceases to function.

3. FUEL

For the most part, Pentapod ships do not use fuel as terran ones do. In some cases, they are equipped with organic liquid fuel rockets which can be used to make course changes or effect landings on various worlds. These are covered in sections 4 and 14.

4. THRUSTERS

Like terran ships, which use compressed gas thrusters to make fine adjustments to course, all Pentapod ships have a basic ability to re-orient themselves in space. This is accomplished by the release of internally stored gases from various orifices on the outside of the starship's hull.

In cases where a craft is meant to touch down on the surface of a world and then lift off again, special organs which resemble liquid fuel rockets must be added to the genetic make-up of the vessel. As a rule, these add 25% to the volume, mass and cost of the ship's power cell.

The amount of fuel which will be required for each landing and lift-off combination is determined in section 14. It should be noted that, in most cases, a craft must be streamlined in order to land.

5. DRIVE

Pentapod starships use a form of stutterwarp drive unlike that found anywhere in human space. Although it is primarily organic in construction, portions of it are crafted from electromechanical technologies similar to those employed on human ships.

Pentapod stutterwarps are not as advanced or effective as those used on Terran ships and designers will want to keep this in mind. When selecting a main drive for a starship, the Stutterwarp Drive Table printed in the Naval Architect's Manual may be used as is, but only Old Commercial systems are available.

6. NERVE CLUSTERS

Unlike Terran craft which require large crews and dozens of work stations to function, a Pentapod starship is fully independent and self-aware. Where human beings are called upon to govern every aspect of a starship's operation with the assistance of various computer systems, Pentapod craft have numerous nerve clusters which serve this function. In essence, a nerve cluster is an independent brain which is capable of ruling a certain portion of the creature's body but not of creative thought.

The number of nerve clusters or crew members which a ship will carry is determined just as for Terran ships. Each nerve cluster has a mass of 5 tons and a volume of 5 m^3. The Pentapods do not have "computer" stations and are unable to employ redundant clusters as back - ups.

The "bridge" section is assumed to be the craft's primary brain and serves as a nexus for the control impulses of all the other nerve clusters. It is capable of creative thought. Pentapod starships have only one engineering cluster in the "bridge" section regardless of their power cell's output.

The engineering section will have 1 nerve cluster for every megawatt of power produced by the energy cells. In combat situations, Pentapod craft are unable to employ damage control parties.

Only those stations which do not govern the actual operations of the vessel will call for the addition of crew members. For example, a craft which carries stewards or troops will have crew members assigned to it while all of the ship's bridge functions (like navigation or communications) will be handled by a nerve cluster.

These rules apply for both large and small ships.

7. ACCOMMODATIONS AND LIFE SUPPORT

Now that you know how many additional Pentapods will be carried aboard the craft, you must supply them with accommodations. Any extra facilities added will be available for passengers at a later point. This is determined exactly as it is for Terran ships as are life support requirements.

It should be noted, however, that the Pentapods do not employ any form of simulated gravity in their spacecraft.

PENTAPOD ARMED MERCHANT

Original Date of Design: Unknown
Builder: Pentapods
First Example Laid Down: Unknown or N/A
First Example Completed: Unknown or N/A
Streamlining: As Shuttle
Sensors Package: Navigation, Deep System Scan, Passive
NERVE CLUSTERS:
Central: Pilot/Captain, Navigation, Communication, Engineering
Tactical: Sensors
Engineering: 5
Work Stations and Crew: 2 Stations; 3 Crew: Cargomaster, Steward, Medic
PERFORMANCE CHARACTERISTICS:
Warp Efficiency: 4.5 Empty 2.4 With Typical Load 2.0 Using Laser
Power Plant: 5 Mw
Endurance: 30 Days (Full Power)
Thruster Fuel: 158 Tons
Range: 7.7LY
Mass: 484 Tons Empty, 1103 Tons with Typical Load
Passengers: 7
Cargo Capacity: 619 Cubic Meters
Comfort: 0 (Combat Purposes Only)
Emergency Power: N/A
Total Life Support: 40 Days
Equivalent Price: 14.027 MLv (+ 2.44 ADJ)
Movement: 5 Loaded, 9 Unloaded, 4 Using Laser
Screens: 0
Radiated Signature: 3
Radial Reflected: 3
Lateral Reflected: 4
Weapons: 1 Pentapod Offensive/ Defensive Laser in Masked Turret
Targetting Nerve Cluster: Yes
Radial Profile: -3
Lateral Profile: -2
Hull Type: Rigid
Armor: 0
Hull Hits: 3/2/1
Power Plant Hits: 8/4
Active Sensors: None
Passive Sensors: 3
Ship's Vehicles: None
Other Systems: None

This is a popular vessel with Pentapod merchants. It has the merit of being able to get cargo and passengers to the surface without the problems of interface vessels. It is similar to other merchants except that it carries a laser primarily for defense. Although this added weight slows the ship down a little when it is unloaded, it does not affect its loaded characteristics. Cargo capacity is also slighty lessened, but many cargomasters welcome the security.

PENTAPOD PASSENGER VESSEL

Original Date Of Design: Unknown
Builder: Pentapods
First Example Laid Down: Unknown or N/A
First Example Completed: Unknown or N/A
Streamlining: None
Sensors Package: Navigation, Deep System Scan, Gravitational Sensor, Passive
NERVE CLUSTERS:
Central: Pilot/Captain, Navigation, Commo, Engineering
Tactical: Sensors, Flight Controller
Engineering: 20
Work Stations And Crew: 7 Stations; 9 Crew: Stewards x 4, Medical x 2, Security x 3

PERFORMANCE CHARACTERISTICS:
Warp Efficiency: 4.93
Power Plant: 20
Endurance: 20 Days (Full Power)
Thruster Fuel: None
Range: 7.7LY
Mass: 508 Tons
Passengers: 41
Cargo Capacity: None
Comfort: 0 (Combat Purposes Only)
Emergency Power: N/A
Total Life Support: 20 Days
Equivalent Price: 11.48 MLv (+.83 ADJ)
Movement: 10
Screens: 0
Radiated Signature: 4
Radial Reflected: 2(3)
Lateral Reflected: 4
Weapons: None
Targetting Nerve Cluster: N/A
Radial Profile: -2
Lateral Profile: -1
Hull Type: Viscous
Armor: 0
Hull Hits: 6/3/1
Power Plant Hits: 6/3
Active Sensors: None
Passive Sensors: 10
Ship's Vehicles: None
Other Systems: None

This passenger vessel is intended for travel between established worlds which have interface vessels. Such vessels are required to carry passengers to or from the world's surface.

8. SENSORS

Pentapod sensor technologies far exceed human levels in some fields and fall far short of them in others. For example, their ability to "construct" Gravitational scanners is almost non-existent, but they are able to create life sensors of unequalled accuracy. Apply the following modifiers to the values given for Terran Starship construction when outfitting a Pentapod starship with sensors:

Navigation Radar: No Modifiers, all values are as listed.
Deep System Scanners: 2x volume, mass, cost, and area.
Gravitational Scanners : 3x volume, mass, cost, and area.
Cartographic Sensors: No Modifiers, all values are as listed.
Life Sensors: .5x volume, mass, cost, and area.
Active Sensors: No Modifiers, all values are as listed.
Passive Sensors: No Modifiers, all values are as listed.

9. WEAPONS

Many Pentapod starships do not mount weapons, being primarily commercial in nature, but there are exceptions. Those that do have offensive capabilities generally rely primarily on organic lasers. In some cases, Pentapod craft may be outfitted with launched weaponry, but these are almost always of terran construction and carried in organic versions of external slings. All Pentapod weapons systems are assumed to be in Masked Turrets.

The following table lists the most common varieties of Pentapod laser weapons:

Defensive- Damage: x1, Price: Lv100,000, Vol/Mass: 1
Offensive / Defensive- Damage: x2, Price: Lv150,000, Vol/Mass: 2
Offensive- Damage: x3, Price: Lv200,000, Vol/Mass: 3

9a. TARGETTING

Just as Pentapod craft do not have "work stations" as such, they do not employ fire control systems in the way that Terran designers think of them. Rather, the brain which controls the ship is induced to grow a special nerve cluster which is adept at fire control functions. Only one such cluster is required for the entire craft, though its mass will vary based on the number of weapons which it must support. As a rule, the nerve cluster will have a volume and mass of 1 per weapon controlled and provide each weapon with a +1 for targetting.

10. SCREENS

Pentapod craft employ screens which are similar in function to those used by human vessels save that their components are organic rather than electro-mechanical. This makes them somewhat less effective than human-built screens. Designers should make use of the Old Military Screens Table listed in Star Cruiser without alteration.

11. HANGAR DECKS

Pentapod vessels do not employ hangar decks. Rather, all of their auxiliary craft are carried in external mounts.

12. HULL MASKING

Due to the unusual nature of power systems employed in Pentapod starships, Hull Masking is not normally required as all of their craft radiate far less energy than similar Terran vessels.

13. HULL

Pentapod craft have two types of hulls: rigid and viscous.

Rigid hulls, which look like lengths of bamboo and are made of a superdense bone-like material, are used for craft which are intended to see combat or operate within planetary atmospheres.

Viscous hulls, which look like nothing more than teardrop-shaped blobs of slime, are far more common and are used on craft which need not enter atmospheres.

It is possible to construct rigid or viscous hulled starships in the same manner as normal ones, simply add the following data to the Hull Materials Table on page 15 of the Star Cruiser Naval Architect's Manual:

RIGID HULLS: Material: Pentapod Rigid Hull, signature Multiplier: 0.7, Lv per m3: 1,500, Tons per M3: 6, Armor Multiplier: 3x.

VISCOUS HULLS: Material: Pentapod Viscous Hull, signature Multiplier: 0.3 , Lv per m3: 1,500, Tons per M3: 4, Armor Multiplier: 5x.

14. STREAMLINING AND THRUSTER FUEL

Only rigid hulls may be streamlined. If the decision is made to do so, it is exactly as described in the Naval Architect's Manual.

Although Pentapod thrusters do not function in the same manner as Terran ones, it is possible to treat them as similar in the design phase. In actuality, Pentapod thrusters resemble regenerating liquid fuel rockets. A highly volatile fluid is created by specialized glands and injected into a boney tube-shaped ignition chamber. Once fuel is in the chamber, it is ignited by an electrical spark and an explosion is triggered to create thrust.

The fuel gland is equal in both mass and volume to the fuel tanks employed on Terran ships as computed in Star Cruiser. One important feature of the fuel glands used by Pentapod ships is that they can recharge themselves. In general, a fuel gland can be ready to make its next descent / ascent combination in only 24 hours.

Time to Orbit: The time required to attain orbit from a planetary surface is determined just as it is in Star Cruiser.

15. CARGO

Pentapod starships can (and often do) have cargo storage facilities within them. They are designed in a manner similar to that used for Terran ships.

16. PYLONS

Pentapod craft do not make use of pylons.

EVALUATION

1. MASS

Total the mass of all components and carried vessels to find the normal average cruising mass of the ship. As this may vary (due to cargo, etc..) from trip to trip, it should be recalculated before each voyage.

2. DRIVE EFFICIENCY

This is calculated in a manner similar to that used for Terran vessels.

3. FIRE STATISTICS

Record the data on the ship's weaponry as previously determined.

4. COMFORT

Keeping in mind the fact that Pentapod craft do not employ simulated gravity, this can be determined in the same way that it would be aboard a Terran ship. It might also be noted that this is for passengers only and that the ship itself always receives a 0 Comfort rating for combat purposes. Further, human passengers will certainly find Pentapod vessels to be, at the very least, wholly disgusting to be aboard.

5. EXPENSE

Add the cost of all components to find the cost of the ship itself.

6. REFLECTED SIGNATURES

All Reflected Signatures are determined in the same way that they would be on a Terran starship.

7. RADIATED SIGNATURES

The unusual nature of Pentapod power systems makes their Radiated signatures far less pronounced than those of human built craft. Once the normal power usage is determined for the starship, multiply that number by .5 and then consult the table on page 11 of the Naval Architect's Manual to determine the radiated signature of the ship.

8. HULL HIT VALUE

This is the same as for Terran starships. A hull which is reduced to 0 points indicates that the ship has been killed.

9. POWER PLANT HIT CAPACITY

Divide the Volume of the ship's power cell by 5. This number, rounded up, is the total amount of damage which the system can sustain before the ship is killed. The ship can sustain half of this amount (rounded up) before being rendered inoperable.

PENTAPOD FIGHTER

Original Date of Design: Unknown
Builder: Pentapods
First Example Laid Down: Unknown or N/A
First Example Completed: Unknown or N/A
Streamlining: None
Sensors Package: Navigation, Passive, Active
NERVE CLUSTERS:
Central: Pilot
Engineering: 5*
Work Stations and Crew: None

PERFORMANCE CHARACTERISTICS:
Warp Efficiency: 4.4 (3.7 Using Laser and Active Sensors)
Power Plant: 5 MW
Endurance: 4 Days (Full Power)
Thruster Fuel: None
Range: 7.7LY
Mass: 178 Tons
Passengers: None
Cargo Capacity: None
Comfort: 0 (Combat Purposes Only)
Emergency Power: N/A
Total Life Support: N/A
Equivalent Price: 11.362 MLv (+.14 ADJ)
Movement: 8 (7 Using Laser and Active Sensors)
Screens: 0
Radiated Signature: 3
Radial Reflected: 3
Lateral Reflected: 3
Weapons: 1 Pentapod Offensive Laser
Targetting Nerve Cluster: Yes
Radial Profile: -4
Lateral Profile: -3
Hull Type: Rigid
Armor: 3
Hull Hits: 36/18/9
Power Plant Hits: 1/1
Active Sensors: 7
Passive Sensors: 10
Ship's Vehicles: None
Other Systems: None

The "designers" of this vessel intended it to serve as an in-system defense vessel. With no actual crew, this vessel can stay on station for an indefinite amount of time. Its laser gives it a good offensive capability while its armor allows it to absorb some damage.

*Note: This small craft includes an engineering nerve cluster for the power plant.

PENTAPOD REMOTE

Original Date Of Design: Unknown
Builder: Pentapods
First Example Laid Down: Unknown or N/A
First Example Completed: Unknown or N/A
Streamlining: None
Sensors Package: Navigation, Active, Passive
NERVE CLUSTERS:
Central: Controller
Work Stations and Crew: None

PERFORMANCE CHARACTERISTICS:
Warp Efficiency: 6.29
Power Plant: 4
Endurance: 4 Days (Full Power)
Thruster Fuel: None
Range: 7.7LY
Mass: 36.7 Tons
Passengers: None
Cargo Capacity: None
Comfort: 0 (Combat Purposes Only)
Emergency Power: N/A
Total Life Support: None
Equivalent Price: 13.71 MLv (+1.66 ADJ)
Movement: 13
Screens: 0
Radiated Signature: 3
Radial Reflected: 2
Lateral Reflected: 2
Weapons: None
Targetting Nerve Cluster: N/A
Radial Profile: -4
Lateral Profile: -4
Hull Type: Viscous
Armor: None
Hull Hits: 1/1/1
Power Plant Hits: 1/1
Active Sensors: 7
Passive Sensors: 12
Ship's Vehicles: None
Other Systems: None

Its exceptional speed allows this remote to reach its destination quickly. While this commends it to many Pentapods, the remote is often used at a lower speed in order to disguise its ability and identity. Although it is Pentapod in manufacture, it functions similarly to human remotes and probes.

10. TARGET PROFILE
This is determined just as it is for human craft.

11. FIRING ASPECT OF WEAPONS MOUNTS
Again, this is handled in the same way that it is in Star Cruiser.

12. ARMOR VALUE
Simply record the value of any armor added to the hull during the design phase.

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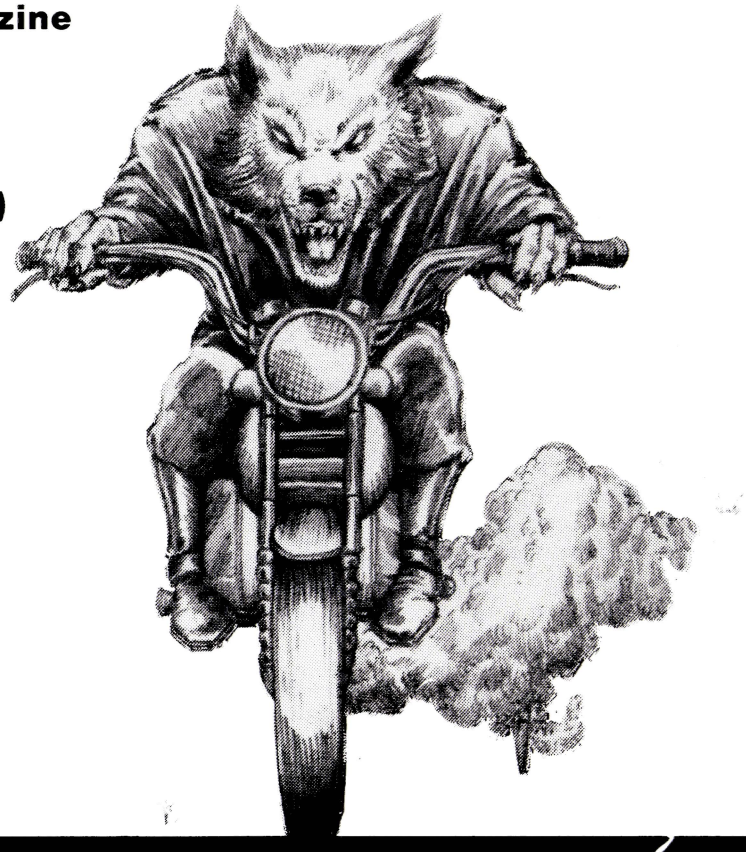

WHITE WOLF
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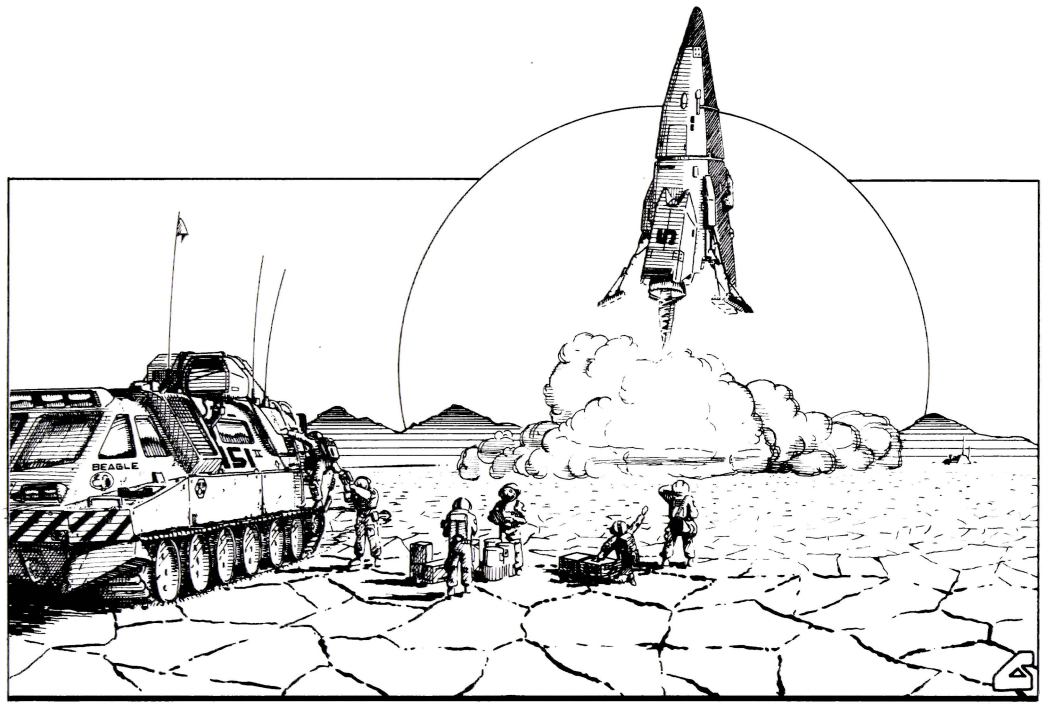
CLARKESSTAR

—By Clay Johanson



The name "Clarkesstar" applies to all six gravitationally bound members of this stellar group, with each component referred to by its specific designation. Because of its position at the entrance of the American Arm, the system became a center for the Arm's early development. Many exploratory missions originated from bases in the Clarkesstar system, and the system's abundant resources helped more than one nation begin its leap to the stars. Though not as active as in the past, the system has become vital to future development in the American Arm.

STATION HISTORY

The British presence in the Clarkesstar system is the only non-Australian/non-American installation on the American Arm. DeVilbiss Station is named for British scientist-industrialist Brian DeVilbiss, who strongly advocated a joint British-American-Australian space program and was on record as saying,"The ESA might as well have been called the French Space Agency".

In 2183 DeVilbiss chose an asteroid in the VB-8B system as the site for his scientific outpost. He felt that with proper encouragement, the British government might be persuaded to withdraw from the ESA and concentrate its efforts on the American Arm.

DeVilbiss had a strong fascination with VB-8B: the study of brown dwarfs was a great interest of his, and, as it turned out, would be of vital interest to the future of the American Arm. Construction began on the outpost in late 2185. When it was completed in 2187, the DeVilbiss Station had accommodations for 800 personnel and was equipped with an extensive array of sensors for observing the brown dwarf.

In the interest of conserving resources, the American Space Force (ASF) and Royal Australian Space Navy (RASN) constructed adjoining facilities in the DeVilbiss Station's asteroid and signed a lease to rent support systems from the existing outpost. This ASF-RASN facility was to be "returned" to DeVilbiss in 2220. Many joint ASF-RASN survey missions were based out of DeVilbiss Station. In accordance with the lease agreement, the two space agencies moved out of DeVilbiss Station in 2220, leaving space for an additional 700 personnel.

Another agency renting space at the station was the Baytown Corporation. A major American mining concern, Baytown had official American government sanction to locate and exploit tantalum deposits for the fledgling American Space Force. Surveys of Weylan (VB-8B-I) indicated that the planet was rich in heavy metals. Baytown had starships and landers available, but not a convenient base of operations.

Three binary stars make up the Clarkesstar system: DM-8 4352, Van Biesbroeck 8 , and Wolf 629. Each system, along with its planets, is described in detail below.

DM-8 4352

The DM-8 4352 system has two M-class stars, 4352 A and 4352 B. The A component is an M4 V star with a mass of 0.38 Sol and a luminosity barely one hundredth that of Sol. Its companion, 4352 B, is a less luminous red star of almost identical mass. The two stars orbit each other at a distance of 2.73 astronomical units (AU), with a period of 1.7 years.

The 4352 planetary system consists of three worlds: Kelly, a 1000 km ice ball orbiting 4352 A at 0.9 AU; Lionel, a gas midget orbiting 4352 B at 0.8 AU, and Tell.

Lionel's ring system is very spectacular in color and size, with five major and almost 20 minor rings, all stabilized by small "shepherd" moons. Tell, the outermost world in the system, orbits both stars, at a mean distance of 15.31 AU from the system's center of mass. Only 2,000 km in diameter, Tell is covered by a sheet of smooth ice.

What has prevented development in the 4352 system is that both stellar members are unpredictable flare stars. The flares' magnitude, particularly 4352 B's, is sufficient to render the entire system lethal to unprotected humans. The irregular timing between flares compounds the situation.

Because of its flare problem and lack of appreciable resources, the 4352 system is only used for navigation. Starships approaching Clarkesstar home in on the 4352 system until they drop below the c-barrier. A more direct course to DeVilbiss Station or the Weylan outpost in the VB-8 system can then be plotted.

Baytown set out for Weylan from DeVilbiss Station in early 2189. The survey's discovery of tantalum on Weylan resulted in a large flow of men and supplies through the station until 2198, when all mining on Weylan ceased. Baytown then cancelled its lease and was out by 2203.

After Brian DeVilbiss's death in 2207 and the subsequent breakup of his company, the British government took over the station to prevent its closure. In 2261, the InterSystem Baseline Interferometry Program (ISBIP) was initiated by the Australian-American Exploration Council (AAEC). With the need for a receiving dish in the Clarkesstar vicinity, the AAEC saw DeVilbiss Station as a choice site. Its orbit about VB-8B was distant enough to reduce the giant world's electronic "noise" to manageable levels, and its support facilities would simplify dish construction. A contract specifying control and maintenance of the dish was signed with the British, and construction of the dish was completed in 2264.

With the DeVilbiss Station asteroid tidally locked to VB-8B, the dish was built into the face-out side. The dish's reception direction may be altered by steering the receiver. In this fashion, the dish can observe any object within a 96-degree arc of overhead "sky", at any given moment.

Since the ISBIP dish became operational in 2269, an additional 300 personnel have resided at the station. The ISBIP program, once fully functional, led to the discovery of several previously unknown planetary systems with brown dwarfs (which are hard to locate, as they give off little in the visible range of the spectrum) as their stellar primary. The most notable of these discoveries was the brown dwarf designated as ISO 417, located strategically between AC+20 1463-148 and AC+2 2155-242. This placement bridged the gap between these two systems and opened up a whole new region of space for exploration.

The AAEC is currently planning to expand its facilities around VB-8B to include a new 40-meter optical telescope, the Woomera Telescope with construction of the subassemblies slated to begin in 2302. The primary mirror will be built in an orbital facility around King.

OUTPOST HISTORY

The American Interstellar Science Institute (AISI) mounted several expeditions to Weylan (VB-8B-I). During the AISI's 2188 visit to Weylan, tantalum was discovered. The scientists were excited about the discovery and promptly returned to Earth with the results which were given to the AISI. The board of directors then sold the information to the Baytown Corporation.

It was a widely known fact that Baytown had been commissioned by the American government to "locate and exploit any and all accessible tantalum deposits in the American sector of space". Although America had developed stutterwarp technology independently of the ESA, the North American continent had little tantalum available. Sale of the stutterwarp technology to Canada, Australia, Brazil, and Argentina had netted enough tantalum to keep the ASF in business for a while, but the reserves were running out. In desperation, the government had contracted with Baytown to locate new tantalum deposits. Now, Baytown had found some.

Baytown's survey of Weylan located several major deposits. By February of 2189, several pressurized buildings were in place. The domed outpost, whose design was later used by the Japanese on Davout and the Brazilians at Ross 614, was completed in January of 2190. Full operations began two months later. Huge ground trucks carried processed ore to the central outpost to refine into pure tantalum. Baytown began producing tantalum at an incredible rate.

Large shipments went to the ASF for several years, then Baytown reported the lodes were disappearing too deep into the planet to be mined safely. Despite protests from America, which had contracted for many years' shipments, the output fell drastically, and then Baytown gave up.

Baytown pulled out of Weylan in October of 2198. Baytown had received contracts to participate in the mining efforts on King and was more than happy to write its outpost off as a tax loss.

The AISI returned to Weylan in 2293. Their scientific team moved into the upper levels of the old Baytown facility and are using it as their base of operations, with a multinational team joining them in a study of Weylan's atmospheric chemistry for possible uses.

THE MISSION

While passing through the outpost at Broward, one of the characters notices a strange advertisement on the outpost's information board. The ad says, "Troubleshooters needed for file maintenance and retrieval," and provides an address where interested individuals may apply.

The address happens to be the local office of the North American Research League. When the characters arrive, they are quickly led to back office by Thomas Ewing, the local NARL supervisor. He explains the mission to the characters: recent exploration of lower levels of the Weylan outpost by an undercover NARL agent led to his examining the outpost's old central processing unit (CPU). There, the agent discovered a file which, as far as the agent could tell, may prove that Baytown diverted the tantalum to another country in defiance of the ASF contract.

Regrettably, the agent was not well-versed in computer programming and could not break the security coding on the file. Unfortunately, the agent was killed in an accident several days later. Ewing needs the characters to travel to Weylan and retrieve the file so that NARL may take its

VAN BIESBROECK 8

The Van Biesbroeck 8 (VB-8) system has been the object of scientific scrutiny since the late twentieth century. The system is composed of a red star, VB-8, and its dark companion, the brown dwarf VB-8B. It was the first example of a brown dwarf "star" to be discovered by man. Other notable examples of brown dwarfs known today are Tithonus (Eta Bootis's largest "planetary" member) and the recently discovered ISO 417.

Ignoring the VB-8B component, the VB-8 planetary system has a single major world. Smythe, with a diameter of 7,500 km, orbits VB-8 at approximately 0.9 AU. It has a primitive biosphere consisting of some simple, tiny plant varieties which spread out like mats around geothermal vents in the planet's surface.

VB-8's dark companion supports its own small family of planets. Weylan orbits VB-8B at 2.8 million km and is described in detail later, in the Outpost History section. Rutherford is a desert planet orbitting VB-8B at almost five million km. Several minor planetoids fill out the system.

WOLF 629

The Wolf 629 system has two stars and three worlds. Wolf 629 A is an M4 VI red subdwarf with a mass barely one-tenth that of Sol. The B component is a red star which is separated from its companion by a mean distance of three AU. Both stars are exceptionally stable, in vivid contrast to their hyperactive neighbors in the DM-8 4352 system.

Wolf 629 A's first planet is an ice-covered world named Kitt. Its large relative size and high albedo make it shine exceptionally brightly, when visible in the night sky of its planetary companions. Tompkins is another icy world which circles Wolf 629 A at 0.85 AU. Wolf 629 B's sole planet is Lucas, a small, extremely dense rock with a badly scarred surface orbitting at 0.7 AU.

The Wolf 629 and DM-8 4352 systems are separated by 894 AU. Thus, the radiation emitted by the stars of the 4352 system has a negligible effect on the worlds of Wolf 629.

case to court. As there are many nations represented on Weylan right now and no one knows which nation got the diverted tantalum, this will have to be an undercover assignment also.

PLANNING

Ewing has already devised a plan for infiltrating the characters into the AISI-manned Weylan outpost. He provides them with credentials from the American Archaeological Society (AAS). The group's cover story is that they wish to recover artifacts, such as clothing, and mining equipment, to preserve as reminders of America's space history, from the lower levels of the outpost. Ewing will contact the Weylan outpost and properly notify them of the party's arrival.

Payment for the mission is US$3,750 (Lv3,000): half upon departure for Weylan, the other half upon successful delivery of the file. Running with the money is not recommended: the NARL is (literally) everywhere. If the characters are cold to Ewing's proposal, he will not increase the pay, but instead, appeal to their sense of justice and patriotism. America cannot afford this kind of double-cross! (If they still refuse, the ref should have another bulletin board adventure ready.)

Once the characters accept the mission, Ewing arranges travel aboard the cargo vessel *ACS Connesstee Falls*. Although the conditions aboard the *Connesstee* are fairly shabby, the characters find they have plenty of room.

The characters have computer terminals at their disposal and have access to all the information presented in the first part of this article. Let the players read it, but don't let them reference it once they're away from a terminal — remember, they aren't taking the computer with them.

Upon arrival in orbit about Weylan, the characters are transferred onto a lander and flown down to the planet's surface.

ARRIVAL

Upon their arrival at the outpost's landing grid, the group is greeted by Julie Peterson, the head of the AISI expedition. As the party travel to the outpost in the expedition's Explorer ATV, Peterson tells the characters about life in the outpost, describing everything from airlock procedures to kitchen duty. "After all," she says, "we're all in this together."

During their conversation, Peterson mentions to the characters that they are not the only newcomers to the outpost. A freighter which was delivering supplies to the outpost experienced a major reactor leak, and the ship had to be evacuated. Luckily, she explains, the AISI shuttle was nearby and rescued the crew of the hapless vessel. The crewmembers are staying in the outpost until their company sends a vessel to pick them up.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

When they arrive at the outpost proper, the ATV pulls into a garage and the characters are led down a long stairwell into the planet's surface. Peterson leaves the group to attend to business and the characters are taken to their quarters by one of the other AISI scientists. Since the only currently inhabited level of the outpost is the administration level, the characters are provided with a conference room for their lodging. "Welcome to the Weylan Hilton", their guide says with a lopsided smirk as he disappears out the door.

While the characters are setting themselves up in their room, the announcement for dinner beckons them from the computer station. Dinner is served in what was once the executive cafeteria. During the meal, the characters have ample opportunity to meet many of the outpost's staff and the stranded freighter's crew. (Referees: make this situation difficult for the characters by having the NPCs ask them detailed questions about archaeology, their work, and the AAS. You can have some good fun making the characters sweat over this "interrogation".)

If the characters are suspicious of the freighter crew, they have ample time to talk with the crew eating. By most indications, the crew seems sincere and the accident an honest mishap.

DOWN

The next morning, Peterson suggests the group begin its mission and offers one of her personnel as a guide. She is not offended or suspicious if the characters refuse the guide offer with a good excuse. If they stumble in refusing the offer and had trouble keeping up a front at dinner last night, the situation could get sticky, with Peterson restricting the characters from going below while verifying their credentials and mission, to the best of her ability. The AISI group, while friendly, can turn pretty nasty if deceived. If trouble does arise, it would probably be better to tell her the truth (she is American, after all) and ask for her help in maintaining their cover. But let the players do it their way. If they keep up the lie in the face of suspicions from Peterson, their mission will become known when her off-planet inquiries are answered. She might then allow them to try what they came for, but it will be too late; they will have failed the assignment.

Before the characters begin the descent, they should make sure to take the correct equipment with them. Characters who opt to take infrared imaging gear with them will discover that

everything below the administration level is of approximately the same temperature, and IR will be fairly useless except for locating fellow crew members.

Peterson has arranged for one of the three airlocks leading down to be opened for the characters. The stairwell is dark and fairly dusty, but in good repair. After the characters are through the airlock, it is sealed behind them, set to open again in 8 hours time.

SUB-LEVEL SIX

When the party arrives at sub-level six, they find only inch-deep dust and the occasional scurrying rodent (the decendants of escaped or abandoned lab animals from the AISI's first occupation). Their maps provided by the NARL indicate that the CPU lies in the Internal Systems Control Room of the outpost, diametrically opposed from their entry position on this level.

The journey around to the other side of the outpost's central shaft is slow. Debris from an exceptionally strong earthquake thirty years ago litters, and in some places, almost completely blocks the corridors. The movement of the characters stirs up the dust on the floor, in billowy clouds, further obscuring the beams of their lights.

When the characters near the control room, they may notice recent signs of activity; namely, footprints in the dust. This can be played up to increase tension, but the truth of the matter is that most of the prints were made by the recently deceased NARL agent. Though, upon closer inspection, the characters may notice there are two distinctly different, fresh sets.

Upon entering the control room, it is a simple matter to find the CPU access terminal. However, when approaching the terminal, they will notice a few wisps of very recently disturbed dust floating in the stagnant air, around and heading away from the terminal. The dust is certainly too much to have been raised by a passing rat.

It should be impressed upon the characters that there is almost certainly someone down here with them. Characters who brought IR gear, but discarded it, may now regret their decision. Several facts are unknown to the characters: (a) who is in the control room? (b) what is that person(s) doing here?, and (c) are they dangerous? What the characters can assume is that the unknown person was doing something to the CPU.

In reality, the "reactor leak" suffered by the orbitting freighter was intentionally set, in order to infiltrate one of Baytown's agents into the Weylan outpost. The agent, posing as a newly-hired engineering assistant, sabotaged the freighter's reactor and escaped with the rest of the crew.

Her goal is similar to that of the characters, but with a major difference: she intends to destroy the incriminating file. Baytown stands to lose more than just money if the file is made public.

The Baytown agent is just as suprised by the characters' appearance as they are by hers. The group has thrown a wrench into her plans for disabling the CPU and escaping, especially since she doesn't know whether or not they are armed. Since she doesn't want to gamble on that question, she has prudently decided to hide behind a crate of computer equipment until her tactical situation is better.

At this point, the referee should feel free to conduct a really confused melee between the characters and the agent. It is important to note that, though the characters outnumber the agent, she has at her disposal a set of IR goggles and a Traylor Model 57 automatic pistol. The characters should also be warned that stray shots may damage the CPU beyond repair, thus accomplishing the agent's job.

RESOLUTION

If the characters succeed in incapacitating/ capturing the Baytown agent, it should be a simple matter to break the security coding on the file and transfer the information to a storage medium. Upon delivery of the file to Ewing, he will give the characters their remaining money and congratulate them on their success. With the new evidence, the NARL will confront Baytown in court, in a bid to make an example of the company.

Of course, if the characters are unsuccessful in preventing the destruction of the file, Baytown will have gotten away with their crime. While Ewing will be most upset, he will not hold the characters' failure against them. In parting, he will tell them to keep in touch with the NARL. "You never know, we might need you again, someday."

HISTORY OF THE CLARKESSTAR SYSTEM

1985: Van Biesbrock 8B discovered by earthbound scientists.
2164: First Survey of Clarkesstar system by British explorers.
2187: British outpost formed on De Vilbiss asteroid.
2189: Tantalum deposits discovered on Weylan by AISI scientists.
2198: Weylan mining facilities closed down.
2261: ISBIP survey started by AAEC.
2264: ISBIP dish at De Vilbiss completed.
2269: ISBIP dish begins full operation.
2293: AISI research team returns to Weylan.

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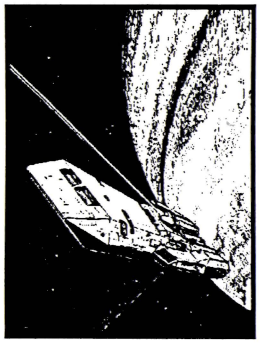

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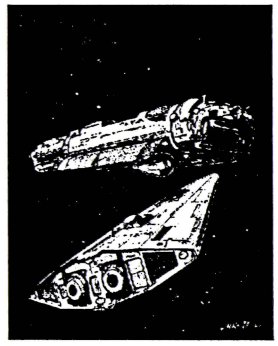

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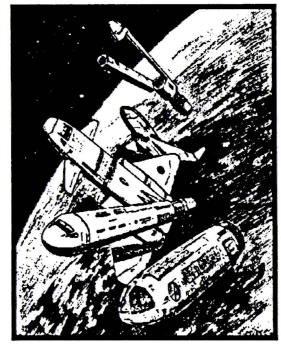

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